

السنة 1415 هـ

Thursday October 2 1996

Thursday October 3 1996

| | | |
|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Abu Dhabi D 8.50 | Greece D 400 | Norway NK 10 |
| Algeria L 220 | Hong Kong HK 25 | Oman OR 1 07 |
| Amman J 10 | India IN 150 | Pakistan R 10 |
| Amman J 30 | Indonesia ID 150 | Pakistan R 10 |
| Amman J 30 | Israel IL 150 | Poland Z 6.20 |
| Amman J 30 | Italy I 200 | Portugal P 200 |
| Amman J 30 | Jordan JO 1.25 | Qatar Q 8.50 |
| Amman J 30 | Korea KR 100 | Russia RS 2.00 |
| Amman J 30 | Kuwait KW 1.00 | Small Arab R 10 |
| Amman J 30 | Lebanon LB 1.00 | Saudi Arabia SA 20 |
| Amman J 30 | Lithuania LT 2.00 | Slovenia SI 1.20 |
| Amman J 30 | Malaysia MY 1.00 | Spain P 250 |
| Amman J 30 | Maldives MV 1.00 | Sweden SE 1.00 |
| Amman J 30 | Malta MT 0.45 | Switzerland SF 3.20 |
| Amman J 30 | Mexico MX 1.00 | Thailand TH 8.00 |
| Amman J 30 | Morocco MA 0.45 | Turkey TL 100.000 |
| Amman J 30 | Netherlands NL 4.00 | Ukraine UA 2.00 |
| Amman J 30 | Norway NK 10 | USA US 2.75 |

The Guardian

INTERNATIONAL

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

48,674

Printed in London, Manchester, Frankfurt and Roubaix

The broadsheets that think like tabloids

Books

OnLine

Split personality

Read all about it!

With European weather

Crown duels

Antonia Fraser on the Queen

G2 pages 8/11



Trading shares on the Net

G2 pages 12/18

And the gifts, Mr Hamilton?

New evidence of payments in kind

David Leigh

NEIL Hamilton, the beleaguered ex-Trade Minister, took not only large sums of secret cash from the parliamentary lobbyist Ian Greer, but also gifts and payments in kind worth thousands of pounds, it emerged last night.

Mr Hamilton and his wife, Christine, used the cover of an Ian Greer company account at a leading London department store to obtain furniture. Mr Greer also paid for paintings on a picture gallery. He also bought the couple plane tickets.

Sources at Peter Jones, the Knightsbridge department store in Sloane Square, confirmed that Mr Greer's company kept an account there, although "it hasn't been used for some time."

Greer sources also confirmed yesterday that Mrs Hamilton had on at least one occasion in the late 1980s chosen and collected furniture for the Hamiltons' home, but paid for on the Greer Associates Ltd account.

Paintings worth almost £1,000 had been picked out for the Hamiltons elsewhere. Mr Greer had also footed the bill. Pressure increased on the disgraced MP last night when Liberal Democrat leader Paddy Ashdown wrote to Mr Major last night asking "whether you should allow such a man to continue to hold the party whip when, if as surely must be the case, you conclude that Hamilton deliberately lied to the Deputy Prime Minister."

Mr Hamilton was last night facing the prospect of expulsion from the Commons because of his failure to declare any of the Greer payments in the Register of Members' Interests.

Mr Hamilton told photographers outside his home yesterday morning that he would be attending a function at 10 Downing Street, with the Prime Minister and six Cabinet ministers. He suggested he would pose for pictures there.

After the news broke, Labour politicians expressed their fury, suggesting Mr Major was guilty of a gross misjudgment to allow him into Number Ten. Mr Hamilton later said he would not be attending. He was too busy.

Asked whether Mr Hamilton would have been well come a Downing Street spokeswoman laughed before replying: "You couldn't possibly expect me to answer that."

Mr Ashdown's letter follows admissions wrung from Mr Hamilton since he dropped his libel case, that he had taken two payments as introductory commissions totalling £10,000 from Mr Greer. He maintained this formed no "financial relationship."

Although Mr Hamilton admitted taking two payments from Greer, he had in fact taken at least four, Guardian inquiries now reveal.

Mr Hamilton promised to disclose his tax returns to the Guardian's lawyers while they were preparing for the libel trial, but by last weekend, when he sensationally dropped the case, he had not done so, despite repeated requests.

The tax returns would have revealed if he had declared any "payments in kind", such as furniture from Peter Jones.



Closed door policy... a reception at Number 10 was out of bounds to Neil Hamilton last night. PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM TURNER

fees" or one-off commission payments.

Mr Hamilton's reaction to this was deliberately to conceal the payments by not entering them on the register, in the same way as he had concealed a free holiday in Mr Al Fayed's Ritz hotel in Paris with his wife in 1987.

The Conservative MP John Browne, when found guilty

by the Members' Interests Committee in 1990 of not declaring interests, was suspended from the Commons for 20 days. Parliament has unlimited powers to punish its MPs.

By last night Mr Hamilton was becoming something of a political leper, despite a series of vigorous performances on TV and radio abusing

himself to contain the controversy over their role in accepting Greer cash.

More than 33 of them now turn out to have accepted election funds from Greer, both in 1987 and in 1992.

Tangled webs, pages 2-3; Leader Comment and Letters, page 5; Cleaning up the sleaze, page 9

Dressed up, nowhere to go



Was Hamilton welcome? "Ha ha ha," said a spokeswoman

"I'm going to my solicitors now and to Number 10 for a reception later. You can get pictures of me there this evening."

Neil Hamilton, speaking to photographers when leaving home yesterday morning

"I'm far too busy just to spend my time in social intercourse and drinking"

Neil Hamilton after news of his plans provoked anger

ADVERTISEMENT new Labour new life for Britain

For new hope For a new government Join Labour today

Call any time on 0990 300 900

Reduced rate: Student/unwaged/part-time/retired/ on a government training scheme (please specify)

Registered rate: I am a low-paying member of a trade union affiliated to the Labour Party. I have paid the political levy for the last 12 months

Name of union and membership number

I enclose an additional donation of £

Total including membership fee £

(BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE)

Full name Mr Ms Dr

Address

Postcode Date of Birth / /

Please give your full postcode as it is used to determine your total party I enclose a Cheque/Postal Order, payable to "The Labour Party" I accept the rules and constitution of the Labour Party

Signature Date

Please return the entire form to: The Labour Party, Room 408, FREEPOST, 200 Smith House, 150 Waterloo Road, London SE17 1BR. No stamp required.

Labour

Clinton scrabbles to save crisis summit

Martin Walker in Washington

BILL Clinton announced yesterday that Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, have agreed to resume immediate talks on the Israeli withdrawal from the flash-point West Bank city of Hebron.

The United States president said talks on Hebron would begin on Sunday at the Erez border point between Israel and the Gaza Strip - but could not conceal the fact that no progress had been reached on the main issues underlying

ing the crisis, which has left at least 70 dead and hundreds wounded over the past week.

"The problems are still there, the differences are still there," Mr Clinton said. "They were not able to resolve their differences here."

He was speaking as a last-chance negotiating session over lunch at the White House failed to break the deadlock between the two sides.

Earlier, after morning talks had ended without result, one Palestinian official said: "It's finished - we could not agree on a single thing."

The sticking point was the Palestinian demand that Israel set a firm date for withdrawing its troops from Hebron, as agreed by the former Israeli government.

Mr Netanyahu said this was impossible without agreed security arrangements for Israeli settlers in the city. Instead, he offered only a date for the end of talks on Hebron.

"The demands of the Palestinians are for an immediate redeployment from Hebron without any security arrangements anywhere else," an Israeli spokesman said.

After a night of talks between Israeli and Palestinian officials, US officials had been hopeful a deal was taking shape.

The compromise proposed by the US suggested that Israel would announce a firm

date to fulfil its promise to withdraw from Hebron while Palestinians agreed to leave the matter of the tunnel under the al-Aqsa mosque - the opening of which sparked the latest violence - to an international commission.

But as US aides gathered yesterday morning to propose more direct talks, the Israeli leader insisted that he could not compromise on the security issue of Hebron - and direct talks did not take place.

Instead, the morning session ended in recrimination. Mr Arafat insisted that Israel honour the promises signed by its previous government and the Oslo accord, which Mr Clinton had also signed.

Despite US pleas that the Palestinian leader could not be expected to restrain new violence if he had to leave empty-handed, Mr Netanyahu stated no Israeli leader could leave any of his people at the mercy of Palestinian police after last week's fighting.

Clinton administration sources were furious at the role played by the Republican presidential candidate, Bob Dole, in strengthening Mr Netanyahu's hand by demanding that the US put no pressure on Israel to make concessions.

Israeli soldiers yesterday shot dead one Palestinian and wounded five in two incidents in Hebron, Israeli security sources and Palestinians said.

Octuplet mother loses last babies

MANDY ALLWOOD, the woman who conceived octuplets, last night lost her last four babies, completing the miscarriage which began on Monday and fulfilling doctors' predictions that she could not deliver any alive.

Ms Allwood, aged 32, rejected medical advice that a selective termination would increase the chances of some babies surviving. Instead she engaged the publicist Max Clifford and sold her story to the News of the World.

Last night Mr Clifford said: "It's just tragic... Mandy desperately wanted to have all or some of the babies."

Full story, page 4

Inside

Britain
A lowly cleric accused of killing a French student kept her body hidden in his car for 10 days before dumping it, court heard today.

4

World News

Britain will today launch a diplomatic push to deny asylum to people promoting terrorism, urging the United Nations to tighten criteria.

7

Finance

The FTSE-100 smashed through the 4,000 barrier for the first time amid continued optimism on company results and the economy.

11

Sport

England coach Glenn Hoddle said he would not tolerate heavy drinking by his players ahead of the World Cup qualifier against Poland.

16

Comment and Letters 8; Obituaries 10

G2
Crossword 15; Weather 16; Radio 16; TV 16

9 770261 307347



HAMILTON'S TANGLED WEB

Lobbying on behalf of US company funded lavish lifestyle

Rightwingers fought fiercely on behalf of US tobacco firm to avert ban on carcinogenic product

Tory MPs' unhealthy campaign



Health ministers were astonished that MPs, including Neil Hamilton, were lobbying to stop Britain banning Skoal Bandits

David Hemoke, David Fallis and Jamie Wilson

WHEN TWO Conservative MPs came to see David Mellor and Kenneth Clarke at the Department of Health, the ministers were astonished to be lobbied on the grounds that people had the right to kill themselves by consuming a product called Skoal Bandits, which causes mouth cancer.

Ministers were facing a strong campaign to halt the ban. Mr Mellor said yesterday: "I took the view that it was monstrous that US Tobacco were free to peddle a noxious substance like this — tea bags full of tobacco to chew in the mouth — within this country. I was extremely keen to see the law tightened up to prevent these products being sold."

In an interview with the Guardian, the executive said: "I was told by Ian Greer that Neil Hamilton and Michael Brown advised UST that professional lobbyists should be instructed, and they recommended IGA."

According to the executive, Ian Greer won the business of the ministers who became the target of a farcical campaign throughout the 1990s, illustrates how Messrs Greer, Hamilton and, in this case Brown, worked behind the scenes for their own gain.

Details of how this worked would have been exposed in the Guardian's defence against allegations of libel this month by an insider in Mr Greer's organisation who was a senior executive. Now the trial has been abandoned, he wishes to remain anonymous — but provided a graphic description of how the two MPs won the lobbying company the account, and eventually worked on behalf of the company.

UST were £120,000, which would mean Hamilton and Brown received £6,000 each. The executive goes on to describe how he saw the two MPs working in the House of Commons. "I would say that Hamilton and Brown became the prime movers and shakers in terms of the UST parliamentary lobbying campaign. They would write letters to ministers putting forward the interests of UST, they were talking to ministers in the lobby and contacting other MPs to discuss issues relevant to UST. They were effectively IGA's eyes and ears and voice in the House of Commons."

The executive describes how Mr Hamilton not only obtained an introduction fee, but also a trip to the United States to stay at an expensive apartment in a New York hotel with his wife, Christine, and even spent a night in a luxury hotel in London in order to attend a business meeting, all at the expense of UST.

condominium. The executive recalls a conversation with Neil Hamilton after he returned from the States. "He told me how well UST had looked after him and how much he had enjoyed the trip."

He also remembers Mr Hamilton insisting that he must be booked for a night at

the luxurious St James's Court Hotel in London or he could not attend a business meeting with the company. "I do not know why this was stipulated because Mr Hamilton had a flat in London."

free trip from British Airways for himself and his wife. During the period after Mr Greer won the account, both Mr Brown and Mr Hamilton were active in Parliament on the Skoal Bandits issue.

Five parliamentary questions were tabled by Mr Brown in 1987 and 1988 to Edwina Currie, then a junior health minister. Mr Hamilton, while not tabled any questions, became involved in proposing an amendment to the 1988 Budget to change the taxation of tobacco to benefit the introduction of Skoal Bandits.

When ministers proposed regulations banning Skoal Bandits in December 1989, Mr Hamilton was the lead name on a motion to annul them.

Bandits to IGA. "I never worked for Ian Greer nor lobbied for him, which is why I thought I did not have to declare the payment," he told the Times yesterday.

Mr Hamilton, who has disclosed two payments from Ian Greer, told the BBC yesterday: "The commissions placed me under no obligation whatever, either to Ian Greer or his company. They were wholly unconnected to my position as an MP."

He also recalls, while handling the Skoal Bandits account, Mr Hamilton seeking a

"I was astonished when I received representation from certain members appealing on civil liberties grounds for the right of people to damage themselves consuming this appalling substance. I felt that this shouldn't be done"

David Mellor when approached by Neil Hamilton and Michael Brown to stop a Skoal Bandits ban

"I do not recall specifically why Mr Hamilton wanted the free trip with British Airways or where he was going, but I think this was a holiday visit"

An Ian Greer insider who was the senior executive for the Skoal Bandits account

Even making allowances, costs don't add up

THE LUXURY HOUSE

Jamie Wilson

THE purchase of a £400,000 house in his Cheshire constituency might have been expected to put Neil Hamilton into deep water financially. Mortgage payments alone were more than his parliamentary salary.



The Hamiltons' £400,000 mansion in Cheshire, bought in 1990, and, right, the block where the MP has his London flat



The block where the MP has his London flat

reply raises more questions than it answers. In 1990 the average mortgage rate was 15 per cent. A 25-year £200,000 repayment mortgage cost £30,980 a year, (£2,580 per month), so the Hamiltons would have needed a combined income of £45,000 before tax to pay the mortgage alone.

Mr Hamilton was also entitled to an allowance for office costs which in 1990 was £27,166. This is intended to cover secretarial and research assistance, and office equipment. Assuming that Mr Hamilton, who employed his wife as his secretary, paid her a generous £13,000 salary, their combined income would have been just over £40,000 — £10,000 less than their estimated outgoings.

After tax, this would have meant the Hamiltons had only about £26 a week to fund their expensive lifestyle. Hence their need for extra income.

The Hamiltons also maintained a flat in London, but the cost of that was almost certainly covered by the "additional allowance" given to MPs with constituencies outside London.

Documents to be seen behind closed doors

Richard Norton-Taylor

KEY documents, the contents of which would have been publicly aired in court had Neil Hamilton's libel case against the Guardian gone ahead, will now be examined behind closed doors, MPs and officials who will pursue the affair said yesterday.

They will be examined first by Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, and then by the Commons Privileges and Standards Committee.

Many of the papers are the property of the Government, Mr Hamilton, and the lobbyist, Ian Greer. The Guardian is returning hundreds of documents obtained for the purposes of the trial.

Sir Gordon yesterday highlighted the contrast between court proceedings and his own inquiry. "I don't have the powers to force people to cooperate," he conceded. His inquiry into the Hamilton case would be "a private affair".

He would pass his conclusions to the committee and it would decide whether to publish his report and a full transcript of the committee's subsequent hearings.

A senior Conservative member of the privileges committee said: "The Guardian is reluctantly to be congratulated. It revealed a state of affairs the existence of which I did not suspect in my worst nightmares."

He said the committee had a duty to subpoena all parties concerned who should identify all relevant documents.

There is widespread confusion surrounding what will be an unprecedented test for both Sir Gordon and the new Commons committee. Iain Duncan-Smith, one of the committee's Tory members, said it would investigate only if Mr Hamilton disagreed with Sir Gordon's findings.

Labour has a weapon to hit the Tories in their weakest area — sleaze

THE GUARDIAN

NEIL Hamilton has handed the Labour Party a gift more valuable than any lobbyist's fee. His cavalier pursuit of the Guardian over claims that he asked parliamentary questions for cash has ended in ignominious rout. Mr Hamilton may have wanted to clear his name, rebuild his career and restore what he saw as responsibility to reporting. Instead he has succeeded only in damaging his reputation, his party and the constitution.

has a provocative ability to range into territory his more cautious colleagues never risk. There was sympathy for Mr Hamilton in many quarters when allegations in the Guardian led to his departure from the Government. He vigorously denied he had received money from Mohamed Al Fayed to help him fight his case at a time of great potential embarrassment to the Government instead of waiting until after the constituency does not sit well with its posture as the defender of ancient liberties against overhasty change. But the greater damage is not to the Tory reputation for consistency, but to probity. The Conservatives' efforts to win back the affections of the electorate have

been continually stymied by revelations of sleaze. From the high politics of the Scott report to the low farce of ministerial faithlessness, a series of incidents has reinforced the impression of a Government too long in power and too careless in its exercise.

That sense will only be reinforced by Mr Hamilton's abandonment of his action and the new revelations appearing. Some may be trivial... But the cumulative impression is as damaging as the perception that the party is split. Deceit is a more harmful charge than division.

John Major, who still enjoys a reputation for plain dealing, has tried to restore faith in public life with the establishment of the Nolan committee. Many of the lobbying practices which so offended public opinion have ended. But public confidence in this Government is still at a low ebb, and it is difficult to see how it might be easily restored.

Evening Standard

THE evidence makes plain that Neil Hamilton was fully deceitful [over] his dealings with Mohamed Al Fayed.

Advertisement for Radio Times featuring the text: 'MEN THINK THEY CAN CHANGE THE WORLD. THEY CAN'T EVEN CHANGE THE LOO ROLL. The role of men and women. Will it ever change? In this week's Radio Times we speak up for Britain's women. RadioTimes IT'S NOT WHAT YOU EXPECT.'

Vertical advertisement on the right edge of the page with various headlines and images, including 'GRAND TALK WEB', 'Media Two of the best of the group last m', 'Lobbyist der...', 'proper link...', 'Ps in series', 'media', 'Interviews, bu...', 'marks fail', 'accuracy test', 'breaki', 'Tories pl', 'OUR MPS', 'BLIVED', 'Law retreat', 'SIES AND', 'ONATIONS'.



GREER'S TANGLED WEB

Media blitz two days after libel case dropped at last minute



Ian Greer: said MPs to whom he gave money for election campaigns were mostly personal friends PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN GOODWIN

'I have certainly never paid anyone to ask questions. I'm a political lobbyist. Do you expect me to engage in a corrupt act?'

Ian Greer, October 2, BBC1 News 1pm

'We would never say we can arrange to have a question tabled, but actually we can. If we went out and said that, there's bound to be someone who would take great offence to think that a middleman could arrange such a thing but, as it happens, yes of course we do'

Ian Greer, March 1994, unbroadcast Cook Report

Lobbyist denies improper links to MPs in series of media interviews, but remarks fail accuracy test

Breaking cover to lay a false trail

IAN GREER broke cover yesterday to give a series of interviews in which he denied having any improper financial relationships with MPs. He said most of the MPs he gave money to for election campaigns in 1987 and 1992 were personal friends who asked for donations.

He said he had to abandon the libel trial because a "professional conflict rather than a personal one" cropped up which meant new lawyers would have had to be hired at great expense. He said commission payments he had made to Mr Hamilton, Michael Brown and Michael Grylls were simply "thank-you" payments for introducing new businesses.

David Pallister finds a number of his more tendentious remarks can be shown to be wholly inaccurate.

ON Radio 4's World At One Mr Greer said that this time last week he believed he was winning. "I understand George Carman, who is Mr Al Fayed's friend and lawyer, didn't even take on the case, made excuses, because he knew we were going to win."

ON BBC lunchtime television news Mr Greer said he denied categorically that he had paid any money in exchange for favours [asking questions] in Parliament.

ON World At One Mr Greer was asked why he did business with Mr Al Fayed after the DTI report accusing him of lying was published in the Observer in March 1995. "Mr Al Fayed is an extraordinary man," he said. "I was happy to do business with him at the time, and I did a damned good job. But I didn't know then the sort of animal that he really was. When you do business with someone you do it on the basis of trust, and that trust hasn't worked."

ON the same programme Greer said: "I categorically deny that I ever received money, nor would I, to pay members of parliament to ask questions. That we have been a corrupt act, and I'm not a corrupt person, and nor is my company corrupt."

Richard Ferguson, QC for Mr Greer and Mr Hamilton, approached The Guardian last Friday asking for a settlement. In the space of a weekend the Greer/Hamilton claim was scaled down from a demand for £2.5 million in damages, a contrite apology and a gagging clause... to no apology, no gagging clause, no damages and the plaintiffs paying the Guardian £15,000.

Non-Tories play down payments

LABOUR MPS INVOLVED

David Hencke

TWO prominent Labour MPs yesterday faced embarrassing revelations that they had received money from Ian Greer Associates for their fighting funds for the 1987 and 1992 elections.

Doug Hoyle, MP for Warrington North, is both chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party and a member of the Commons Privileges and Standards Committee. He received £500 paid into his election fund by Ian Greer in 1987.

Chris Smith, the high-profile shadow health secretary, received £200 in 1992, for his campaign in Islington South, the constituency which includes the home of Tony and Cherie Blair.

Mr Blair himself faced problems yesterday when David Shaw, Conservative MP for Dover, reopened the



Doug Hoyle... election fund paid £500 by Greer



Chris Smith... received £200 for 1992 campaign

row over the Labour leader not declaring a £4,500 free trip by Concord to the United States on the Unitary Tax Campaign, promoted by Ian Greer Associates.

"The Guardian and other newspapers ought to give as much publicity to the Tony Blair Concord trip that was paid for by Ian Greer Associates, amounting to £4,500 in clats, an issue which was before Parliament at the time," Mr Shaw said.

Yesterday Mr Hoyle was supposed to come from Mr Al Fayed.

Mr Hoyle could well face problems when Sir Gordon Downey's inquiry into the "cash for questions" scandal starts. The Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards will be passing his findings to the committee - whose members include Mr Hoyle.

Mr Smith yesterday emphasised the difference between the £200 donation to his constituency and the issue of "cash for questions" which has been going on with Neil Hamilton. "No favours were asked by Ian Greer Associates in return. If they had been, he'd have got a very dusty answer indeed," he said.

The Liberal Democrats were also distancing themselves from Mr Greer's donations. Alan Beith, Liberal Democrat MP for Berwick-upon-Tweed, said yesterday: "My local association received a donation to the general election appeal from Ian Greer or his company, in 1987. It was a straightforward donation to the campaign of a couple of hundred pounds."

Mr Beith had not had any contact with Mr Greer since.

Shaw retreats over Greer money

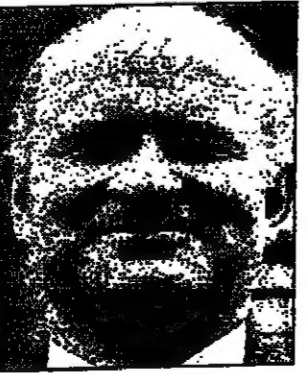
TORIES AND DONATIONS

Owen Bowcott and David Leigh

THE Conservative MP David Shaw yesterday retreated from his claim that the Guardian had been lying about when his constituency party received money from the political lobbyist Ian Greer.

Insisting that his local agent's accounts showed no record of any such donation in 1987, Mr Shaw conceded there was a "remote possibility" that another donation could have come through a Greer company account.

Mr Shaw's Dover constituency party is understood, according to information given to The Guardian, to have received a cheque for £500 from Mr Greer that year as well as a similar sum at the



David Shaw: Suits 'kept away from candidates'



Sir Andrew Bowden: had 'not received a penny personally'

general election in 1992. Yesterday, accepting that he could have been more circumspect about using the word "lying", Mr Shaw, aged 45, revealed that his party fighting fund had received up to £500 in 1987 from a personal friend, Dave Allen of DHL. The delivery firm is also a client of Ian Greer Associates.

"The money [in 1987] came from Dave Allen," Mr Shaw

said. "It was a donation from Dave Allen and not from Ian Greer."

"I don't think I even knew of Ian Greer at that stage... even if there's a remote possibility that it might have been drawn on an Ian Greer account, I would regard it as money from Dave Allen."

The money was paid into the constituency fighting fund and was handled by his

agent, Mr Shaw said. "These sums are kept away from the candidates."

Sir Andrew Bowden, the Conservative MP for Brighton Kemptown, yesterday confirmed that his local party had received £5,000 from Ian Greer Associates in 1987.

A friend of Mr Greer's for 40 years, Sir Andrew revealed that his constituency party had received numerous donations in the past. "Going back to the 1970s we would be talking about hundreds rather than thousands."

The money had been for local party election expenses, not his use. "I have not received one single penny personally from Ian Greer."

The money was "entirely separate" from any dealings he had with Mr Al Fayed. Sir Andrew was recruited in 1987 to help Mr Greer's campaign on behalf of Mr Al Fayed. He dropped out of the campaign later that year.

There is no suggestion either MP did anything illegal or operated outside the rules of Parliament.

MR GREER told ITN in reference to Mr Al Fayed: "This man certainly passed me no money at any time. I categorically deny it. It would have been a corrupt act, and I am not a corrupt person and my company is not corrupt."

An internal Tory Central Office memorandum, published in the Guardian yesterday, specifically acknowledged that Ian Greer had been given £18,000 from Mr Al Fayed for contributions to the election campaigns of 21 Tory candidates in 1987. Furthermore, Mr Greer admitted in his witness statement to the court that he had received £18,000 from Mr Al Fayed and a cheque for £15,533 from Mr Al Fayed on top of his £30,000 annual retainer.

Mr Greer continued to do business with Mr Al Fayed after the report was leaked and after it was officially published in 1990. Mr Greer was prepared to accept money to defend Mr Al Fayed from criticism.



Meet Mike and Liz.

Mike and Liz have a brochure that will help them choose the right home.

Mike and Liz have just spent over three years in a poky little flat with no garden (Mike's constant gripe). Understandably, they are more than ready to move, which is why they asked for a copy of Midland's free brochure called "Choosing your home". It's a practical guide that takes you through the whole process of choosing a place, from assessing the neighbourhood to planning and maintaining a garden (Mike's favourite page). For a copy call 0800 100 129. Lines are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



Member HSBC Group

For further details please complete the coupon and send to: "Choosing your home" brochure, FREEPOST BS4335, Bristol, BS1 3YX.

Form with fields for Name, Address, Town, Postcode, Telephone

Are you a first-time buyer? Yes No. Are you a Midland customer? Yes No. Are you happy to receive information from Midland in the future? Yes No.

Medical personnel stress 'tragedy' for mother expecting octuplets, whatever her motives in getting pregnant and selling her story

Last of eight babies are stillborn

Sarah Boseley and Chris Mihill

MANDY Allwood, the woman who refused a selective abortion for any of her eight babies, yesterday lost the last of them. Three male babies — small enough to fit into the palm of one hand — were stillborn on Monday. Yesterday afternoon, doctors discovered that another — a girl — was on its way down the birth canal. Ms Allwood lost the last four at around 9pm.

The hand-written notification from King's College hospital, where Ms Allwood was taken on Monday, was stark. "We regret to announce Mandy Allwood has now lost her four remaining babies," it read.

Medical personnel at the hospital and other experts outside have made clear that the loss of all her babies is a tragedy for Ms Allwood, whatever her motives in getting pregnant, attempting to give birth to all eight babies, and selling her story to the News of the World.

Robert Forman, clinical director of the London Gynaecological and Fertility Centre, said: "Ms Allwood will be psychologically completely devastated. It is like a bereave-

Timetable of tragedy

MAY: Eight babies conceived after Mandy Allwood takes fertility drugs. **JULY:** Boy friend Paul Hudson approaches Central TV and publicist Max Clifford. **AUGUST:** Deal struck with the News of the World for an undisclosed fee. **AUGUST 10:** News of the pregnancy breaks. Doctors warn that it is unlikely that all eight fetuses can be brought to term alive. **AUGUST 12:** Gynaecologist Kypros Nicolaides warns that the intense media interest may endanger her health, and calls for the News of the World to withdraw from its contract. **AUGUST 16:** Solihull

health authority refuses to pay for specialist treatment in London. **AUGUST 21:** NHS agrees to pay for Ms Allwood to be treated by gynaecologist of her choice. **SEPTEMBER 30:** Contractions start. Ms Allwood is rushed to King's College hospital, London, after losing a son around 5.30pm. After arriving at hospital, two more babies lost. **OCTOBER 1:** Doctors say it would be a "miracle" if any of her babies survive the pregnancy. **OCTOBER 2:** In the morning, Ms Allwood loses a fourth baby. In the afternoon, she loses the others.

ment. When someone loses a relative it takes a minimum of two years before they recover. She is going to be very affected for a long time."

The case had raised many issues about who should have access to fertility treatment and whose responsibility it should be, Dr Forman said. "I think the doctors have their share of responsibility, but the patients also have a responsibility. If there's one lesson to be learned from this it's that both have to work in partnership."

Bereavement counsellors will try to help Ms Allwood and her partner, Paul Hudson, mourn and come to terms with their loss. As a first step, they will be advised to name the babies.

Ms Allwood went into labour at 19 weeks because her womb was over-stretched. When the babies emerged, they were bruised and exceptionally small. On Tuesday doctors said the five that remained stood little chance unless they could remain in the womb until at least the

26th week of pregnancy. But they made clear the chances were almost nil.

Most professionals respected Ms Allwood's right to make the choice she did. She had been told she stood only a 50-50 chance of giving birth to live twins if she had undergone the selective abortion of the other six embryos. But Ann Furedi, director of the Birth Control Trust, said that circumstances had made it very difficult for her to decide what to do for the best. News of her multiple pregnancy broke at around the same time that a surgeon at Queen Charlotte's Hospital came under fire for the selective termination of a healthy twin.

"The whole thing was a complete mess and a personal tragedy for her and, we assume, her partner. It is clear that she did ignore her doctor's advice (by having unprotected sex too soon after taking fertility drugs), but lots of women do and I don't think she should be too harshly judged for that."

Ruth Greig, spokeswoman for the Family Planning Association, said: "We feel very sorry for her... We hope this case hasn't made women worry about the safety of fertility drugs. If they are used and you comply with the advice you get, they are very safe."



Mandy Allwood and her partner Paul Hudson before she lost the last of her babies yesterday, 19 weeks into her pregnancy

Comment

Sally Weale, Women's Editor of the Guardian, argues that the case must not impede help for those who need it

WHATEVER one's gut reaction might have been in the early days of the extraordinary Mandy Allwood saga, when it was first revealed that she was pregnant with eight babies and intended to carry them to term, today there is room only for sadness and compassion.

What seemed at first little more than a grotesque freak show was last night a desperately human tragedy. During the course of three painful days, Allwood has experienced the agony of losing every single one of the lives she carried within her.

On Monday she miscarried three boys; yesterday morning there was a girl, finally last night the news emerged from King's College hospital that the remaining four babies had been lost. Though only 19 weeks into her pregnancy, she

knew what gender they were; we are told she even held some of her babies in her arms.

From the start, the experts made it plain they expected little else. But whatever her reasons, Ms Allwood decided to defy both public and medical opinion which advocated selective abortion, and took it upon herself to try to do what no woman had done before in the face of overwhelming antagonism.

That Ms Allwood acted irresponsibly in having unprotected sex while taking powerful fertility drugs against her doctors' advice goes without saying. The whole sorry affair was sullied further however when she sold her story to the News of the World amid confused suggestions that the fee paid depended on the number of babies that survived. From

that point on, she was regarded as fair game and her private life, and that of her partner, Paul Hudson, was the subject of countless articles.

Mandy Allwood's is a story of profound personal tragedy — but beyond that, it could have a devastating effect on the lives of thousands of sub-fertile women desperately seeking help to get pregnant. Perhaps the treatment won't be quite so readily available, perhaps the clinics will look a little more carefully at those they choose to treat; maybe some women will be deemed unsuitable.

Some will no doubt argue such caution is only right. But as Mandy Allwood attempts to inch her way back to normality, it would be a pity if one extraordinary story resulted in a wider backlash against fertility treatment.

Child charity plans 35pc cuts

David Brindley, Social Services Correspondent

THE Save the Children Fund plans to cut its spending in the United Kingdom by 35 per cent and withdraw some services for families.

The charity hopes that other voluntary groups will step in to take over many of its schemes, most of which

are in deprived areas. But it accepts that some will close.

The cuts stem from a decision by the charity to reduce its worldwide budget by 25 million, or 10 per cent, in response to a downturn in charitable giving. It insists most of its six global regions are making equivalent sacrifices to the UK.

Critics, however, contend that the charity is downgrading its work in the UK

following its decision last December to wind up its UK and Europe division and relegate it to the status of one of the six regions.

Save the Children was named top fund-raising charity in 1992, but has since slipped five places in the league.

It is still searching for more than a third of the cuts, but the UK and Europe region knows its budget will be

reduced from £54 million to £35.5 million.

Judy Lister, regional director, said yesterday: "We are going to be taking a radical look at the programme, repositioning ourselves and building on our strengths."

The charity will aim to do more work with young people, but will pull out of direct child care. It is not known how many jobs will be lost among its 900 UK workers.

'Lottery winner' hands out money

Brend Clouston

AN Englishman suspected of trying to give money away to Scots was being eagerly hunted yesterday by a Highland policeman concerned for his safety.

The police were summoned after the mysterious philanthropist failed to give bundles of £20 and £50 notes to a shocked Inverness businessman. Earlier, the smartly-dressed, middle-aged man, who claimed to be a £7 million lottery winner called either Stevie-Boy or Kevin, had to be escorted by a constable from a Masonic club where he had unsuccessfully

tried to purchase membership.

The man, who arrived in Inverness by private plane from Birmingham, is believed to have been responsible for last week's record £340 tip to a local taxi driver.

The police were alerted by garage owner Peter Foster, still recovering yesterday from what he described as "the most astonishing encounter of my lifetime".

Mr Foster was walking through a car park on Tuesday evening when he was approached by the frustrated mason. "The man first put a wad of £20 notes in my hand, and then fifties," said Mr Foster, who revealed that his un-

expected benefactor had seemed to be lonely and needing someone to talk to. Mr Foster gallantly shoved the money back in his new friend's sports jacket.

"I had moral scruples about not accepting these wads of notes but I feared he'd get mugged so I telephoned the police," he said.

A police spokesman said an officer had been despatched to look for Stevie-Boy/Kevin, but he had so far not been located. "We are continuing to keep an eye open for this man for his own well-being," he said.

Last week a man answering his description tipped taxi-driver George Campbell £340 for an £11 trip to Inverness airport. He took the notes from a bag containing, on Mr Campbell's estimation, between £70,000 and £80,000.

Cues to the identity of the wealthy tourist remain sparse. He booked his £2,500 charter plane in the name of Gray, but a spokesman for lottery organisers Camelot had no record yesterday of a Gray winning £7 million. "He may exist, but have opted for no publicity," he said.

Whoever he is, Scotland may not have seen the last of him. Before getting the brush-off from Mr Foster, Stevie-Boy/Kevin announced that he was on the look-out for a mansion in Skye.

Lorry driver 'kept French girl's body hidden in cab for 10 days'

Stuart Millar

ALORRY driver accused of killing a French student kept her body hidden in his cab for 10 days before dumping it, Worcester crown court was told yesterday.

On the first day of the trial for murder of Stuart Morgan, aged 37, of Poole, Dorset, the jury heard that he had raped and murdered Celine Figard, 19, shortly after picking her up at a service station near Newbury.

Ms Figard, an accountancy student from eastern France, had been making her way to spend Christmas working at a Hampshire hotel when she disappeared, sparking a huge hunt. Her naked body was found 10 days later on December 29 in a layby on the A449 near Worcester, in Hereford and Worcester.

As her parents Martine and Bernard watched from the back of the court, David Farrer QC, prosecuting, told the jury of nine women and three men she had been raped, beaten and strangled.

He said there was a "compelling wealth of evidence" linking Morgan with the murder. "If ever there was a powerful case based on circumstantial evidence this is it."

Morgan had picked Ms Figard up at Chieveley services on the M4 where she had been dropped off by a French lorry driver. She was seen leaving in Morgan's white Mercedes lorry in the late afternoon of December 19. "It was the last time anyone saw her alive," Mr Farrer said.

He said Morgan had raped, beaten and strangled her, then concealed the body behind the seat of his cab. He had driven considerable dis-



Celine Figard, the student who was raped and murdered

tances, then parked outside his home where he spent Christmas with his wife and son.

After returning to work Morgan had dumped the body at the earliest opportunity. It was found by a motorist less than 24 hours later.

The court heard that Morgan now admitted having sexual intercourse with Ms Figard, but insisted it was with her consent. Morgan claims

he dropped her off safely before delivering his load to Southampton.

Mr Farrer said that after Morgan's arrest police had found blood spots in the cab which matched Ms Figard's blood. Two months later at the defendant's garage in Poole, police had found what appeared to be the blood-soaked mattress for the lower bunk of the lorry's cab.

On the journey from her

home to the French channel ports she had passed through the Champagne region where she had been given two bottles of champagne unavailable in this country. According to the prosecution Morgan had later presented these as Christmas gifts to staff at the petrol station opposite his home where he parked his lorry.

He said Morgan could also be linked to the discovery of what appeared to be items of Ms Figard's clothing at a warehouse at High Erroll, Shropshire.

Morgan regularly delivered loads there and had been at the warehouse on the night the body was dumped in the layby.

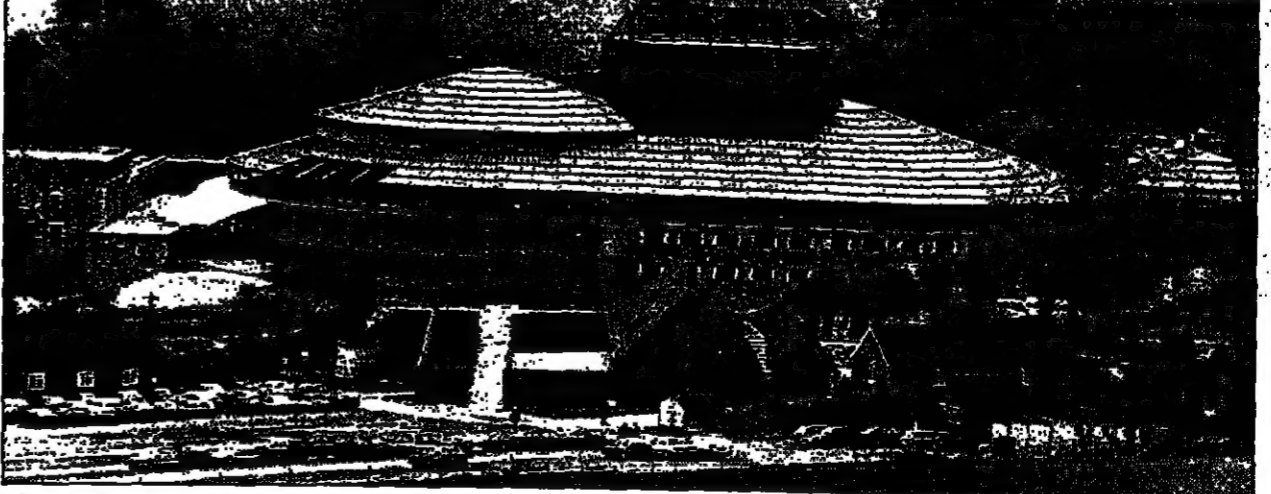
A warehouseman at the court said he had knocked on Morgan's cab door at 8am and asked him to deliver his load to a nearby site. According to Morgan's tachograph his lorry had not moved since his arrival at 1.20am until his departure at 10.30am.

Mr Farrer told the jury there was good reason to believe that Morgan had falsified the records by removing a fuse from the tachometer in an attempt to conceal the dumping of the body.

The warehouseman would testify that Morgan left some time between 8.30 and 8.45 that morning, Mr Farrer said. Moreover, the tachograph did not record the short trip from where he parked for the night to where he delivered his load.

"Could it be that having removed the vital fuse to conceal the journey from High Erroll to the layby he simply forgot to put it back, forgot his movements were not being recorded until after he set off?"

The case continues today.



Glyndebourne opera house, where there have already been clashes over the extent of development

Disharmony rises over Glyndebourne's 'abominable parking aria'

Martin Wainwright

SENSITIVE music-lovers who frequent one of Britain's most celebrated opera houses have been accused of blotting an existing landscape to prevent mud soiling their skirts and shiny shoes.

Councillors have agreed to take enforcement action against Glyndebourne opera, near Lewes, East Sussex, over an "absolutely abominable" but guaranteed muck-free car park for delicate patrons.

Although born of a wish to stage opera in a sylvan and rural setting, Glyndebourne has regularly clashed with residents and conservationists over its steady accumulation of bricks, mortar and tarmac. The "parking aria", as sarcastic locals nickname the gloomy, metalised half-acre, has finally driven Lewes

council to take legal action.

A warning went yesterday to Sir George Christie, chairman of the opera company, giving Glyndebourne six months to return the car park to something more suitable for shepherds and nymphs.

Officers say the work contravenes the law by damaging a designated Area of Outstanding National Beauty and by ignoring the formality of getting planning permission.

All parties on the council have joined the chorus of disapproval after councillors at Lewes town hall were shown a video of the car park and its effect on the sweeping view from the South Downs. "I've been saying for a long time it looks terrible," said Coun Vic Tomkinson, chair of Lewes's northern area planning committee. "They do seem to have a cavalier attitude."

Glyndebourne was cautious yesterday about its enthusiasm for returning to its early, glory days, when strolling through fields and holding damp picnics on the grass was held to give Verdi and

Wagner a welcome edge. A spokesman observed pessimistically: "We don't feel we are able to comment until we receive official notification from the council."

HOUSE INSURANCE

SAVE UP TO 50% or MORE

e.g. LONDON & HOME COUNTIES

£100,000 Buildings Sum Insured

Premium Only £154.00

LOWER Premiums in most Other Areas

Tel: 0181 367 5151 NOW!

Or phone your nearest branch at the local rate on: 0345 123111

Hill House Hammond

Cutting The Cost Of Your Insurance

SOCIAL SECURITY

Castle

Specialists urge

prudence

one to

SALE

NOW

£2

Dr's 2013

LABOUR IN BLACKPOOL 5

SOCIAL SECURITY

Delegates back cautious pensions approach after deciding link to earnings would be too costly

EDUCATION

Do Labour's sums add up? Blunkett admits he faces hard battle to win argument that promises on volunteers, early excellence and literacy are affordable



Lady Castle on her way to the podium to speak on pensions yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH DON MCPHARSE

Castle loses pension fight

Loyalists urge cash prudence

Michael White
Political Editor

TONY Blair's team last night won a comfortable victory for their pension plans after Barbara Castle, 86, half a century after she was first elected.

The leadership's win, by between 40 to 60 per cent, came only after arm-twisting among the major unions, further concessions and a spectacularly defiant speech from Baroness Castle, 86, half a century after she was first elected.

Again she mocked the leadership's warnings that restoring Serps — the state occupational scheme she pioneered as Social Services Secretary in the 70s — would require those in occupational pensions to lose £550 a year.

To twist the knife, she said her plan would cost less than Gordon Brown's hopes of a 10p starter rate of tax — after the shadow chancellor had spent part of the day assuring delegates and wavering unions that he was right.

But the overwhelming thrust of the debate on "fair taxes and benefits" — including Gordon Brown's controversial reforms of child benefit for 16-plus teenagers — was against her. A succession of loyalists, including the left-winger, Peter Hain, urged financial prudence and all but one big union, the GMB, either abstained or voted with Mr Blair on the key vote. The exact result will be announced today.

Though several speakers urged the leadership to take a bolder stance — "the Tories found £6 billion to defeat the miners, surely we can find £6 billion to defeat poverty," said one speaker — the prevailing mood was one of loyalty at all costs.

It fell to Harriet Harman — also in a two-piece red suit — to argue, as tactfully as she could, against the cost of the Castle demands for full restoration of the link between state pensions and average earnings — which has cost single pensioners £23 a week since 1979 — and the revitalisation of Serps.

"We are determined to improve the position of pensioners and determined that unlike the Tories we will honour all the promises we make. We make promises that we can keep and we don't make promises we can't keep."

Not only did Ms Harman offer "dialogue and consensus" over the pension review which Labour is promising in government, she also wound

up her speech by further embellishing the executive's pension statement and the policy document, Security in Retirement.

"After this conference I will bring together and consult all those who have an interest in pensions," she promised.

"Barbara asks 'will our work start now?' The answer is yes," she also outlined what a Blair government would do for the young unemployed, for those in need of a minimum wage and single parents as well as pensioners.

Immediate talks go some way to meet Lady Castle and rather further to placate Jack Jones, the former transport workers' leader, who is president of the National Pensioners' Convention.

But Lady Castle said that "without a full review Labour's new plans were moving towards a framework of private second pensions, and enshrined the means test — "in my view a dangerous attack on the welfare state".

In the event one constituency involved in moving a more radical motion than Mr Blair wanted, Ealing Southall, withdrew in the interests of party unity amid applause while the other, Canning Town and Poplar, stuck to its guns, supporting the Castle package and restoring benefits for 16 and 17-year-olds. "This is not an idealistic wish-list, it's practical," said the delegate, Dave Lawrence. "This is not about costs, it's about priorities and political will."

Jean Bishop, who once taught in John Smith's old school in the Highlands, said she was shocked by beggars on London's streets — "a recent, Tory phenomenon."

Ms Harman joined the attacks on Tory policy as amounting to using the welfare state "to mop up their failure. But we believe the welfare state must be a springboard for people's success — giving a hand up, not a handout."

Sketch

Gran handbags pension muggers



Simon Hoggart

'MUGGERS flee battling gran" would be the headline in the tabloids. The story pensioner Barbara Castle, 86, used her lead-lined handbags to scatter an evil gang of muggers who tried to steal her cash yesterday.

Bystanders looked on amazed as the trail red-haired widow lashed out at the gang of hoodlums. These louts were begging for mercy," said one eyewitness. "But she didn't stop. Even when they were flat on the floor she kept sticking the boot in."

"I say, give 'em a free safari holiday. It's the only language these hooligans understand. It will be surprising if anyone makes a more effective attack on the Labour front bench at the Conservative conference next week. The delegates gave her a standing ovation before she opened her mouth. After that the reception got warmer."

The great joy of being 85 is that you can say exactly what you like whenever you like and everyone has to pretend they admire you for saying it.

She piled scorn upon Gordon Brown. How could he refuse to link pensions to the increase in earnings when he was going to lose between five and eight billion pounds on his 10p tax band?

"Of course we all want to see a lighter tax burden on the lower paid. But a five to eight billion tax cut won't give a penny to the three million pensioners who are too poor to pay income tax."

Then it was Harriet Harman's turn to taste cold handbags. "We are told we will have a policy review after the election. Fine, let's have it after the election. But I'm just a simple Yorkshire girl. What policy do we fight the election on?"

The delegates cheered blissfully as she then attacked the whole apparatus of New Labour. "I know the rickety machinery of policy making that goes on behind the scenes finds it hard to master the intricacies of something as complicated as pensions ..."

Ms Harman sat behind her with the fixed smile of a daughter-in-law who is desperate to imply that granny's outrageous remarks at Christmas are due to the fact that she doesn't drink much and that that second lemonade shandy was probably a mistake. "This is a dangerous attack on the principles of the welfare state," granny concluded, and sat down to a storm of applause. The platform had fixed smiles and only John Prescott looked genuinely pleased.

My colleague, Steve Bell, has noticed Mr Prescott's close resemblance to a wildebeest, or gnu. (see elsewhere in this paper).

He may have been inspired by the book he has been cribbing from, How Animals Live. This includes the passage: "Gnus make deep tracks in the dry soil and kick up huge clouds of dust as they go. They do not seem to be very clever animals. They sometimes forget where they are going. If one gnu starts walking in the wrong direction, others will follow him."

And so it proved to be. After the rapturous reception for Barbara Castle's attack on Harriet Harman, Harriet Harman received an almost equally rapturous reception for her, rather gentler, attack on Barbara Castle. "We owe it to pensioners not to make promises we cannot keep."

This mock piety is as if someone owed you £5 and said: "I owe it to you not to promise to repay you money which I do not intend to give." You'd appreciate the honesty but would rather have the five.

But the fact is that the whole Labour Party has been taken over by the bossy middle classes. At the back of the hall some people have put up a series of nagging handwritten posters. "Quiet!" they urge. "Delegates are trying to hear! No talking, no meeting, no interviews!"

If you have the briefest conversation with a colleague (eg. "God this is boring. Let's get a drink") persons in Mr Blair's suits turn round and make shouting sounds from constricted mouths.

As if anyone went to a party conference to hear the speeches! It's like going to a wedding for the sermon. Some of these misfits even look as if they went to bed sober.

Dixons

one 2 one

SALE

NOW ON

MOTOROLA

SAVE £90

ERICSSON

SAVE £70

NOKIA

SAVE £70

MOTOROLA

SAVE £90

£29.99*

Dixons

There's a great deal going on

one 2 one

FREE UNLIMITED LOCAL WEEKEND CALLS*

Applies from midnight Friday to midnight Sunday (excluding Diamond Tariff).

FREE VOICEMAIL ON ALL TARIFFS

BILLING BY THE SECOND

DIGITAL NETWORK

Offers improved clarity and freedom from noise.

LOWEST OFF-PEAK CALL RATES

Only 50p inc. VAT per minute.

LONGEST OFF-PEAK PERIOD: 13 HOURS A DAY

8pm - 7am Monday - Friday
All day - Saturday and Sunday

*Free local calls do not apply to calls made to mobile phones. For a definition of 'local phone' refer to a 'handy directory of local area codes'.

Volunteers plan 'to lift youth'

Michael White

DAVID BLUNKETT yesterday unveiled details of Labour's ambitious scheme to attract 100,000 young people into a new "Millennium Volunteers" programme designed to foster personal development while helping the sick, elderly and environmental causes.

The £30 million scheme, intended to be a government initiative with business and the voluntary sector, and to would come into effect between 1997 and 2000, was one of three pledges highlighted by the shadow education and employment secretary. The others were his "early excellence centres", to provide a mix of day care and pre-school education, and the plan to get slow readers into three week summer schools before they leave primary school.

All are costed by Labour which plans to save £140 million by phasing out the assisted places scheme for 40,000 private school pupils. But ministers are certain to renew charges of government impracticality — charges Mr Blunkett rejects. "We have a mountain to climb," he admitted.

In an impassioned conference speech he won repeated rounds of applause for pledging fair educational opportunities for all — not just a privileged minority.

The debate was marked by repeated attacks on Conservative policies and calls to defend the principle of comprehensive education from voucher schemes as well as the drift towards selection — a sensitive issue for Labour after the Harriet Harman row and Roy Hattersley's attacks.

Mr Blunkett himself accused ministers of "complacency, neglect and deception" in their education policy. "The Tories always promise to do the many what they only deliver to the few. A grammar school in every town, a secondary modern in every housing estate. One in 20 offered the best, up to 19 out of 20 attending the rest," he said.

Though motions in support of party policy were easily carried, a radical option attempting to reject testing and

A tip-off too good to be true



Blackpool 96

AN GREER in Blackpool? A rumour too good to be ignored. So my colleague Mike White and photographer Martin Argles followed the tip-off to the Pembroke hotel. Could someone tell them where the Amoco dinner, at which Greer was expected, was being held? Ah yes, the hotel told our intrepid team. That will be in the Hamilton Room.

INTERESTING to hear Tony Blair scrupulously resisted Paddy's Breakfast TV invitation yesterday morning to deny that he might offer Paddy Ashdown a Cabinet job. Interesting also to see Paddy's right-hand man Alan Leaman mixing with the nighties in the Imperial hotel last night.

ALL THESE late night champagne parties are proving too much for Labour's Second Lady, Faith Prescott. She suggests that party givers should serve only cocoa after midnight. Not very New Labour, I object. Well, maybe camomile tea for those of more delicate tastes, she suggests.

LADEST victim of conference security? Step forward a spectacularly indignant Roy Hattersley.

MICHAEL GRADE was in town this week for the annual Channel 4 Labour conference breakfast. The Man with the Cigar recalled his early days with the BBC when he went down to Lime Grove with Bill Cotton to crack the whip over his journalists. Anxious to annoy the hacks, Cotton greeted them with a "Good morning, lads, what's the definition of gross ignorance?" No answers. Well, says Bill, in my experience it's 144 journalists. Still no laughs. Then the cerebral editor of Panorama hesitantly raises his hand. Sorry Mr Cotton, he asks, but why 144?

Martin Kettle

The Labour Party exists to further the interests not of the few but of the many, the broad majority of the British people. That is its purpose.

Call our 24-hour membership hotline. Please quote ref. C17

0990 300 900 Labour

National call rates apply. Calls should cost no more than 10p per minute.

I shall not tiptoe meekly away, governor tells Hong Kong assembly Patten vows to keep on fighting to the very end

Andrew Higgins
in Hong Kong

CHRIS PATTEN gave notice yesterday that he will not beat a quiet retreat from Britain's last significant colony. With 272 days of his governorship left, he said he would not "tiptoe meekly" away, but stick to the course which has antagonised Beijing and Hong Kong's mostly pro-Beijing business elite.

"Our motto is not steady as she goes but full steam ahead," he said in his last policy address in the legislative assembly, soon to be stripped of its emblems of empire as well as its 60 elected members.

More important than a smooth transition to Chinese rule on July 1 next year, he said, was a successful one. Denying those who accuse him of disrupting the smooth transfer of sovereignty, he told a press conference after his address: "You can have a very smooth ride to the hospital, but you might never come back."

The speech won few plaudits. Ronald Arculli, a leading pro-business member of the assembly, complained that it had raised too many "confidence-sapping questions". Democrats dismissed it as empty rhetoric.

"The governor hates to be



Tung Chee-hwa, left, and Sir Ti-liang Yang are candidates for chief executive of the post-handover government

called a lame duck, but he has ducked the most important issue of all," said Martin Lee, the Democratic Party leader.

"We believe the defence of democracy... and the defence of rule of law, cannot be achieved by mere words. It can only be done by action, which, sadly, is lacking."

Most people in Hong Kong are more interested in who will replace Mr Patten than what he plans to do with his final months.

There are five declared candidates for the post of chief executive. The front runner is the shipping tycoon Tung Chee-hwa, though the opinion polls show that Mr Patten's

deputy, Anson Chan, is a more popular choice. Another is the recently resigned chief justice, Sir Ti-liang Yang. But Beijing will decide who wins, and democrats dismiss the contest as a sham.

In his address, Mr Patten defended his democratic reforms and increased spending on welfare: policies which China says sap Hong Kong's money-making energy.

Attacking China's plan to replace the assembly with a handpicked, "provisional" body, Mr Patten said: "I sincerely hope, even at this late stage, this bad idea can be thought about again. It is unnecessary as well as provoca-

tive and we will have nothing to do with it."

China shows no sign of backing down. It considers the body illegitimate because it was elected, in September last year, under reforms introduced by Mr Patten without Beijing's consent.

"There was a fair election," Mr Patten said. "The nub of the problem is, alas, precisely that a fair election produced the wrong result for some people, a result in which too many pro-democracy legislators were elected."

"Of the foolish remarks that one occasionally hears about Hong Kong, none is more misguided than the notion that this community does not really care about human rights. Many people, maybe the majority of people, in Hong Kong are here precisely because of their concern for human rights."

His severest comments were directed at unnamed interests eager to make secret deals with Beijing. "My anxiety is not that this community's autonomy would be usurped by Beijing, but that it could be given away bit by bit by some people in Hong Kong."

In an aside to his Foreign Office critics, Mr Patten told the press conference: "I've never been a diplomat. No one could ever confuse me with a diplomat. But I do know the difference between right and wrong."



An Afghan mother in a chador walks through the capital Kabul, obeying orders by the ruling Taliban that women must wear strict Islamic veils in public. Women are also banned from working or studying. PHOTOGRAPH: PATRICK DE NORMONT

Kashmir victor seeks to heal wounds

Suzanne Goldenberg
in New Delhi

THE flamboyant scion of Kashmir's leading political family, Farooq Abdullah, emerged victorious yesterday from the first state elections for nine years, pledging to be tough on gunmen but to heal the wounds of the six-year separatist uprising.

His National Conference party, which has called for more autonomy for Kashmir within the Indian union, took 54 seats in the 87-seat house, and Dr Abdullah was expected to be sworn in as chief minister next week.

He now faces the daunting task of achieving reconciliation with separatist

leaders while persuading politicians in New Delhi to make good on promises of more autonomy.

After meeting political leaders in the Indian capital yesterday, he said the first step was to disarm the militants, and there was little prospect of removing the tens of thousands of Indian troops who have helped stamp out the rebellion while being accused of human rights abuses.

He also promised to find jobs for the estimated 4,000 gunmen — popularly known as renegades — who have given their allegiance to New Delhi.

But Dr Abdullah held out a hand towards the separatist leaders who boycotted the elections on the basis that they did not meet

Kashmiri demands for freedom. "Finally, we all have to live there. And we would like to bring them round to thinking in terms of the constitution of India... I think dialogue will continue at all levels," he said.

Last month's state polls and the restoration of an elected government are seen as crucial to New Delhi's hopes of bringing normality to Kashmir. Although there were signs of coercion during voting, there was less intimidation by Indian soldiers than during parliamentary elections last May.

Dr Abdullah, who was based in London for many years, has been criticised for his absence from Kashmir during the past six bloody years, and for his

reputation as a motorbike-riding playboy.

He remains a credible leader because of his pedigree. His father, the "Lion of Kashmir", Sheikh Abdullah, dominated the state for 50 years, though he spent decades in jail for his efforts to preserve the autonomy pledged to Kashmir nearly half a century ago.

Dr Abdullah became leader of the National Conference after his father's death in 1982, and this was his fourth election victory. He last came to power in 1987 after entering into an unpopular alliance with the Congress party, and amid widespread allegations of vote fraud. Many Kashmiris argue that anger at those elections sparked the separatist uprising.

Afghan warlord's motley crew holds Taliban at bay in north

Chris Bird in
Salang Pass, Afghanistan

AFGHAN fighters wearing a motley array of Soviet army surplus long shirts and turbans blew on their hands as freezing cloud poured down from the peaks of the Hindu Kush mountains yesterday.

The men, members of General Abdul Rashid Dostam's Jumbash faction, were guarding a road tunnel on the strategic Salang highway.

The warlord's men and armour moved on to the pass to forestall an advance northwards by the radical Islamic Taliban militia which seized the capital, Kabul, last week.

The tunnel, 45 miles north-west of Kabul, was abandoned last week by the forces of the deposed president, Burhanuddin Rabbani. It forms a vital link between the capital, northern Afghanistan and the Central Asian republics.

Jumbash Howitzers, mortars and tanks were dug in on the mountains around the tunnel. A Grad multiple rocket launcher had its barrels

trained down the valley, with rice fields and mulberry trees visible in the distance.

"The Taliban are down there," said the frontline commander, General Chary, his outstretched hand following the line of the rocket launcher. "We command the heights — there has been no fighting here."

The Jumbash, or National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan, has said it does not want to fight the Taliban. But the armour guarding the spectacular natural gate to Gen Dostam's northern territory gave a clear message.

"We don't want to fight but we will defend ourselves," Gen Chary said.

The Taliban's lightning advance north, bringing its fundamentalist brand of Islam, sent shivers through the relatively liberal northern territories controlled by Gen Dostam.

But the charred tanks littering the Salang highway, remnants of the Soviet intervention from 1979-89 and later faction fighting, are a reminder of the cost of taking the road.

The snows, due soon, will make any advance across the pass extremely difficult. Winter jackets have been distributed to Gen Dostam's men, some of whom have no socks, in anticipation.

"So far the Taliban has taken towns without any serious fighting," said a Western aid worker in the region. He questioned the Taliban's ability to overpower Gen Dostam's well-armed and well-disciplined forces.

Buses and trucks full of refugees, piled high with bags and bicycles, have westered over the pass away from Ka-

bul to find sanctuary in Gen Dostam's territory.

Colonel Sayed Ahmed, a bearded Afghan commander at the front — Jumbash fighters sport only moustaches — said he had abandoned Mr Rabbani's army and joined the Jumbash to hold back the Taliban. A truck load of Mr Rabbani's soldiers drew up behind the colonel's jeep, also intent on changing sides.

But Gen Dostam cannot rest easy. There is widespread talk of further warfare. "The Taliban wants all Afghanistan," an aid worker said. — Reuter.



Rescuers prepare to begin searching the foggy Peruvian coast for signs of the lost Boeing 757. PHOTOGRAPH: MARIANA BAZZO

Fears for 70 as jet falls into Pacific off Peru coast

Jane Diaz-Limaco in Lima
and Mark Tran in New York

A BOEING 757 with 70 people, including two Britons, on board crashed into the Pacific off the Peruvian coast shortly after take-off yesterday when the pilot reported technical problems and said he was trying to return to Lima airport.

Thick fog and drizzle hampered early air and sea searches for wreckage or survivors from the Aeroperu flight from Lima to Santiago, Chile, but as light improved rescuers reported seeing debris. Life jackets and oil slicks about 40 miles off the coast at Chancay, some 44 miles north of Lima.

Rescue efforts were being concentrated in that area in the search for possible survivors

although hopes were not high.

One body has been pulled from the sea, and there is little hope of finding survivors.

The airline identified the Britons as Mark Bran and Guillermo Serveto, believed to be resident in Chile. It said 21 passengers boarded the flight in the United States, 10 in Ecuador and 30 in Peru. There were nine crew on board.

Radar contact was lost at 1.10am local time, more than 20 minutes after the pilot reported the emergency.

Motorway police said they saw a light falling to the sea.

Local media reported that the computerised navigation system had failed and the pilot had asked for another plane to be sent to guide him through the darkness. He did not know whether he was over sea or land.

Aeroperu refused to release details of the reported mechanical problem.

It said 21 passengers started their journey in the United States, 10 in Ecuador and 30 in Peru. There were nine crew members on board.

The plane was delivered in 1992 and had completed 2,600 cycles of take-off and landing. Boeing sent two employees to help the Peruvian authorities in their investigation, and additional experts were ready if needed.

Two Boeing 757s have been involved in fatal crashes in recent months. In February, an Alas Nacionales 757 from the Dominican Republic went down, killing 189 passengers. The incident is still under investigation.

Last December an American Airlines 757 crashed near Calais, killing 165. There were four survivors. The final

crash report, released last week, blamed pilot error. There are 721 Boeing 757s in service.

Boeing officials declined to comment on reports of mechanical problems.

"We are still sorting out the news reports," a company official said.

This is Peru's second serious air accident this year. In February a plane of the Peruvian airline Faucett, on a domestic flight, crashed into a mountain, minutes before it was due to land in the southern Peruvian city of Arequipa. All 123 on board were killed.

● The US national transportation safety board has recommended Boeing to improve the rudder design on its 737 jets, after two unexpected crashes. Many safety experts suspect that the problems lay with the rudder.

News in brief

Mass arrests in Burma

The Burmese opposition leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, said yesterday that up to 800 democracy activists had been arrested.

Her estimate was higher than that of the State Law and Order Restoration Council, which ordered the arrests to prevent an opposition congress taking place. — Reuter.

Bulgarian killing

The former Bulgarian prime minister, Andrei Lukonov, was found shot dead at his home, the parliamentary speaker said yesterday. The circumstances of his death were unclear. — Reuter.

Suspect held

Police in Compton, California, have arrested a 22-year-old gang member in connection with the killing of the rap singer Tupac Shakur, ABC radio said yesterday. He was shot on September 7. — AP.

Angola hopes fall

The Angolan former guerrilla group Unita boycotted a peace summit yesterday, dashing the hopes of South Africa's president, Nelson Mandela, and other regional leaders that their initiative would lead to a breakthrough in implementing the 1994 peace accords with the government of President Jose Eduardo dos Santos. — Reuter.

Citizen Teresa

President Bill Clinton conferred honorary American citizenship on Mother Teresa this week, saying the nun had demonstrated "how we can make real our dreams for a just and good society". — AP.

Some wavering royalists have only to think of the prospect of Lady Thatcher as President to shudder their way back into the fold.

Antonia Fraser reviews Pimlott

Books, G2 page 11

A CABLE & WIRELESS COMPANY

%84-

MERCURY HAS TURNED BUSINESS PHONE PRICING UPSIDE DOWN AGAIN.

Does your company make lots of international calls? Then simply add Mercury Globalink to your phone system. And start enjoying the savings. Save 48% on a three-minute call to the States during weekday working hours. (Even compared to the new BT basic rate.) We can tell you how much you'll save right now — over the phone. Naturally, that call won't cost you anything.

It doesn't cost anything to talk. FreeCall 0500 800 125.

2 MONTHS FREE LINE RENTAL

FREEPHONE

Britain

Deutschmark makes Austria

New digital 100 hours

NOKIA

MERCURY HAS TURNED BUSINESS PHONE PRICING UPSIDE DOWN AGAIN.

Does your company make lots of international calls? Then simply add Mercury Globalink to your phone system. And start enjoying the savings. Save 48% on a three-minute call to the States during weekday working hours. (Even compared to the new BT basic rate.) We can tell you how much you'll save right now — over the phone. Naturally, that call won't cost you anything.

It doesn't cost anything to talk. FreeCall 0500 800 125.

2 MONTHS FREE LINE RENTAL

FREEPHONE

Experts say proposal to tighten UN criteria on refugee status blurs political dissent and terrorism

Britain seeks asylum limit

Ian Black
Diplomatic Editor

B RITAIN today launches a diplomatic push to deny asylum to people promoting terrorism, urging the United Nations to tighten criteria on refugees in a way that experts warn blurs the boundaries between crime and political dissent.

Foreign Office officials will go to the UN's legal committee in New York with a declaration that anyone "financing, planning and inciting terrorist acts" should forfeit the protection of the 1951 UN convention on refugees.

Britain is also urging the UN to remove the political protection clause — preventing an individual being handed over to a government

he opposes — when making extradition arrangements.

Critics predict the changes will bring demands to hand over dissidents. They say that if Nelson Mandela had been in Britain during the struggle against apartheid he could have been denied asylum and extradited to South Africa as a terrorist.

But government officials insist the question of return is not touched by the proposed declaration, which is non-binding, and that Britain is bound to take human rights issues into account.

The move was initiated partly because of frustration about the activities of British-based exiles, such as the Saudi fundamentalist Mohammed al-Masari, whom the government tried unsuccessfully to deport to the Caribbean island of Dominica earlier this year.

Egypt, Algeria and India have all complained of terrorist activity taking place in Britain.

Home Office and Foreign Office officials insist they are simply trying to close loopholes exploited by people of violence. "We are not looking at dissidents," one said. "We are looking at a far narrower group of people who are beyond reasonable doubt engaged in terrorism."

But some experts believe fundamental freedoms will be eroded. "Terrorism is such a frightener that states only have to mention it and there is a danger that all manner of human rights will melt away," Anne Owens of the human rights group Justice warned.

Britain's declaration, advertised last week by Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, is part of a wider effort involving the United States and France. But the

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) opposes the change because it confuses refugees and terrorists. It insists the 1951 convention is adequate.

The convention excludes people who have committed war crimes, crimes against humanity or acts "contrary to the purposes and principles of the UN". Government strategy is to add terrorism to these categories.

Diplomats say Britain's allies are allowing it to go ahead because common law traditions of free speech mean it lacks laws that are in place in the US and Europe.

"The US will back this but they neither need it nor want it and are only doing it because the UK has supported it on other issues," a source said. "If this declaration does go through, the interpretation

will be very wide. It would be much more useful to have national legislation that would define exactly what the offences are so they can be tested in courts. What is meant by 'planning'? What exactly is 'incitement'?"

Nicholas Blake QC, an immigration expert, said: "Terrorism is an undefined concept internationally, rendering legal judgments peculiarly susceptible to political distortion."

"Western states have armed and supported movements such as the contras in Nicaragua or the mujahidin in Afghanistan that many consider to be terrorists while condemning armed resistance by African liberation movements, the Kurds and others, where no opportunity for democratic change is permitted for oppressed minorities or even the majority population."

John Major announced the British plan after discussions on terrorism at the Group of Seven summit in Lyon in July.

"Clearly you don't want people to be able to commit atrocities and then be able to claim protection, but this raises problems of definition and proof," Ms Owens said. "The international human rights framework was set up to provide protection for individuals against states. If you job in words like terrorism and national security it creates the possibility of states undermining those protections to protect themselves."

John Wadham of Liberty said: "Once you start accepting other people's definition of terrorism you are in trouble. Incitement is a very nebulous term and there are real problems about the difference between crime and dissent."

News in brief

Palme suspect wanted in Zimbabwe

ZIMBABWEAN authorities indicated yesterday that they want to question Anthony White, a former commando implicated in the 1986 assassination of the Swedish prime minister, Olof Palme, about the death of two government game rangers in 1987.

The rangers, identified as Martin Sibanda and Martin Marimo, evidently radioed their base to say they were pursuing suspected poachers led by Mr White, a former captain in an elite unit of the army of Rhodesia, as Zimbabwe was known before independence in 1980.

Mr White, who fled the country at independence, had long been suspected of poaching and involvement in sabotage and "dirty tricks" for neighbouring South Africa's apartheid-era security services, said one senior Zimbabwe police officer.

Mr White has denied any involvement in the Palme killing. — AP, Harare.

Yeltsin urged to step down

RUSSIA'S security chief, General Alexander Lebed, is due to meet President Boris Yeltsin in hospital today, after facing withering insults and criticism in the state Duma for concluding his Chechen peace deal.

The most damning words came from the interior minister, General Anatoli Kulikov, who accused him of appeasement tantamount to Chamberlain's Munich agreement with Hitler.

Gen Lebed joined Communists in calling for Mr Yeltsin to step down as president while he is in hospital awaiting heart surgery, saying the army was on the verge of revolt. He threatened to retaliate against Nato's eastward expansion with economic sanctions against United States firms in Russia, and then hinted darkly that Russia retained a nuclear capability.

He said his powers as the president's representative in Chechnya were "almost exhausted", and it was time for other ministries to take up the peace process.

It may therefore be only a matter of time and choice of occasion before he steps openly into the opposition ranks to await the next time he can make a bid for the presidency. — David Hearst, Moscow.

Turkish PM heads for Libya

THE Turkish prime minister, Necmettin Erbakan, left for a controversial foreign tour yesterday. Turkey's first Islamist leader will visit Libya, Egypt and Nigeria. Foreign ministry officials dissuaded him from visiting Sudan.

The US state department spokesman, Nicholas Burns, said this week: "We certainly would have concern about any country normalising relations with Sudan and Libya." Both are considered by the administration to be sponsors of terrorism. Mr Erbakan has gone out of his way to show that he will not cozy up to the United States with talks of improving ties with Cuba and a visit to Iran.

But there are signs he may have endangered the coalition. Tansu Ciller, leader of partner True Path Party, said yesterday in her capacity as foreign minister that the visit was ill-fated. — Chris Nunnall, Ankara.

US plans anthrax vaccine

UNITED STATES military chiefs have endorsed a plan to vaccinate the country's forces against anthrax, reversing earlier opposition. It would be the Pentagon's first regular inoculation programme against a germ warfare agent, defence department officials said.

The about-face by senior commanders removes the principal hurdle to the plan and reflects heightened Pentagon concern about the prospect of biological attack. Iraq, Russia and as many as 10 other countries are said by US officials to have at least the capability to load spores of the disease into weapons.

Military leaders had been dubious about the need for the anthrax vaccine, instead favouring work on a multipurpose inoculation. — The Washington Post.

Comic irks attorney-general

CALIFORNIA'S top law enforcement official is not amused by Doonesbury comic strip episodes poking fun at a raid by drug agents on a San Francisco club that said it supplied marijuana to ill people.

The state attorney-general, Dan Lungren, called on Universal Press Syndicate — which distributes Garry Trudeau's cartoon strip to, among others, the Guardian — to "pull the plug" on this week's strips, his office said. He urged the step because of the "inaccurate portrayal" of the San Francisco Cannabis Buyers' Club.

The club, operating in defiance of laws against marijuana possession, supplied the drug to about 12,000 San Franciscans who, the club said, used marijuana to ease suffering caused by illnesses such as AIDS, cancer and glaucoma.

Universal Press Syndicate said it did not plan to withdraw the strips. — Reuters, San Francisco.

'Dead' Iraqi seeks to sue

A RETIRED army general has asked the Iraqi president, Saddam Hussein, to let him sue foreign radio stations for alleging he was executed after a failed coup attempt, newspapers said yesterday.

In a telegram to President Saddam, retired Gen Abdul Muhsin Humud al-Jubouri said he was shocked to hear himself named on the August 18 radio broadcasts as one of the coup plotters.

Many news organisations reported the story, quoting the exiled Iraqi dissident group Al-Wifaq Al-Watani, or National Accord movement, which named the general as one of those executed. A spokesman for the movement said yesterday from Amman, Jordan, that it stood by its report and the telegram was a fake. — AP, Baghdad.

Spaniard finds it pays to pray

A SPANISH businessman and devout Catholic who stopped to pray at a church during a trip to Stockholm ended up a millionaire, Germany's Bild newspaper reported yesterday.

The church was empty except for a coffin containing the remains of a man, so Eduardo Sierra, aged 35, knelt down and prayed for the deceased. He then signed a condolence book placed by the coffin after he saw a note saying those who prayed for the dead man should enter their name and address. He was the first to sign.

Several weeks later he got a call from the Swedish capital informing him he was a millionaire. Jens Swenson, the man he had prayed for, had been a property developer with no close relatives and had specified in his will that "whoever prays for my soul gets all my belongings". — AP, Hamburg.

Deutschmark imperialism makes Austrians shudder

Ian Traynor
reports from Vienna on the anxiety caused by German company takeovers

PASTED across the supermarket windows of Vienna this week, in a lame attempt to assuage fears of encroaching German economic might, is the slogan "Priority for Austria".

Whether advertising sausages, yogurt or wine, the "Austria first" message of the Billa supermarket chain has an unintended irony. Last month the chain — Austria's biggest — was taken over by a German firm.

It was the most prominent in a series of German purchases which included the renowned Viennese furniture maker Thonet.

At the Semperit tyre factory south of Vienna, the workforce is fringing. Militants are mobilising against the German parent firm, Continental, which has decided to close parts of the factory, halve the workforce and transfer production to the much cheaper Czech Republic.

"The Germans come in here, take the Austrian subsidies, our taxpayers' money, and then cut Austrian jobs. It's a scandal," one worker complained.

Anxiety is rife among Austria's 8 million German-speaking people. There is fearful talk of a new Anschluss — the term Hitler used for his 1938

takeover — making them Germany's 17th federal state.

"The Germans are our big powerful neighbour. For historical reasons, we tend to get very emotional about this," said Peter Ullram, director of Fesst opinion pollsters.

The Austrian Economics Research Institute estimates that there will be foreign investment of 30 billion schillings (£1.8 billion) in Austria this year, just over 80 per cent coming from Germany.

"The German economy completely dominates the

'Bonn never uses this involvement to make political capital'

internal market here, with 40 per cent of imports and exports," said Jan Stankovsky, its foreign trade expert. "But German business behaves very correctly and Bonn never uses this involvement to make political capital. We're very sensitive about the Germans."

Fears extend beyond the economic sphere. The common language gives Germany a strong influence in literature, publishing, media and culture.

Last weekend, in the border village of Braunau, historians and intellectuals from both sides debated Germany's "appropriation" of leading Austrian artists. The night before, Austrian painters and ar-

chitects in Bonn debated whether there was a separate Austrian art.

"It hurts us when the Frankfurter Allgemeine newspaper describes Peter Handke (the leading Austrian novelist and playwright) as a German writer," said the Braunau conference host, Andreas Maislinger.

A few years ago there was a row when Mr Handke won a literary prize named after the 19th-century playwright Franz Grillparzer. The winner was Austrian, the prize named after an Austrian. But the competition was instituted by a German literary foundation and the prize money was in marks, not schillings.

Austria has no indigenous commercial television but two state channels are overwhelmed by more than a dozen German cable channels.

The German chancellor, Helmut Kohl, who like millions of his compatriots takes annual holidays in Austria, said last week: "There are no more questions of identity today in the relationship between Germans and Austrians."

But things are not that simple. Another Austrian in Braunau said his country's wariness of German appropriation highlighted literature, publishing, media and culture.

Mr Ullram estimated that there was a 10 per cent "greater Germany" contingent in Austria. "But they're mainly elderly and they're dying off. What we're seeing... is a rise in separate Austrian nationalism."



Turkish soldiers and policemen look down on the bodies of four teachers, one a woman, from Hantep village, near Diyarbakir in south-east Turkey. They were found dead after a kidnapping by separatist guerrillas of the Kurdistan Workers' Party

End of the line for TGV

Paul Webster in Paris

THE fascination of successive French governments with the super-speed TGV rail network has been quietly abandoned by the Gaullist-led administration, which believes expansion is too expensive, technically out of date and detrimental to the automobile programme.

The junior transport minister, Anne-Marie Idrac, confirmed a decision to revise plans to build a further 1,400 miles of TGV tracks as she spoke to French industrialists at the Institute of Industrial History. Nine projects are threatened, including a high-speed link between Paris and Strasbourg.

Although Ms Idrac cited only technical and financial reasons for suspending the TGV programme, the decision will be seen as a victory for the motor industry lobby. According to transport ministry sources, funds originally intended for the TGV will now help completion of a further 1,400 miles of motorway.

New super-speed lines provisionally approved in 1992 would have cost more than £20 billion, including to a network which includes the 15-year-old pioneer route between Paris and Lyon, and the line to Bordeaux and the Euxine Channel run. About 3,000 miles of high-speed track carry 160 million passengers a year and cut travelling time by half.

Ms Idrac said projects were being put on hold because France had wanted to go too far, too fast. She said a realis-

tic programme had to be drawn up, based on the development of new trains, built on the tilting principle of the British APT. This would allow TGVs to run on existing all-purpose lines at about two-thirds of their top speed of more than 165mph.

The British-owned GEC-Alsthom, which builds the TGV, has said the prototype will be developed by the end of next year and could be in service by 2000. But some technology may have to be bought from Germany and Italy, where the tilting principle that improves cornering on traditional tracks has been perfected.

News that the SNCF is being forced to rethink a prestige programme, which has resulted in big export orders, will stir up a mixed reaction. Critics have accused the state-owned company of neglecting traditional lines by overspending on TGV tracks.

The system has divided populations, which either resisted new lines — notably in Provence — or lobbied for TGVs in the hope of stimulating local economies.

tic programme had to be drawn up, based on the development of new trains, built on the tilting principle of the British APT. This would allow TGVs to run on existing all-purpose lines at about two-thirds of their top speed of more than 165mph.

The British-owned GEC-Alsthom, which builds the TGV, has said the prototype will be developed by the end of next year and could be in service by 2000. But some technology may have to be bought from Germany and Italy, where the tilting principle that improves cornering on traditional tracks has been perfected.

News that the SNCF is being forced to rethink a prestige programme, which has resulted in big export orders, will stir up a mixed reaction. Critics have accused the state-owned company of neglecting traditional lines by overspending on TGV tracks.

The system has divided populations, which either resisted new lines — notably in Provence — or lobbied for TGVs in the hope of stimulating local economies.

New digital Nokia. 100 hours of power!

NOKIA

NEW GSM MODEL 1610.

- Up to 100 hrs standby-time
- Up to 3.5 hrs talk-time
- 45 name/number memory stored on SIM
- Fast recharge-55 mins
- 5 selectable ring tones
- Weight 250g

VODAFONE PERSONALWORLD

| | |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| Contract | £35.25 (£30 + VAT) |
| Monthly Rental | £17.83 (£15 + VAT) |
| Peak Rate Call | 35.25p per min (30p + VAT) |
| Off Peak Call | 11.75p per min (10p + VAT) |

Personal World pay rates are £30-20.00 when you fit. Monthly Rental billing will be charged at £17.83 per month. Line rental (included) is £1.00 per month. Change of tariff can be done at 1 second notice.

2 MONTHS FREE LINE RENTAL
WORTH £22.25 INC. VAT

LIFETIME PRODUCT WARRANTY
Our Lifetime Product Warranty covers your phone against electrical or mechanical breakdown for as long as you own a Vodafone World contract.

Cellphones

LIMITED OFFER

£9.99
INC. VAT

- FREE LINE RENTAL - for 2 months worth £35.25 inc. VAT
- ONE SECONDED BILLING - you only pay for the airtime you use
- MORE POWER - up to 100 hours standby-time, up to 3.5 hours talk-time
- BEST COVERAGE - with digital call clarity and security
- FREE ACCESSORIES - in-car adaptor and leather case together worth £25 inc. VAT

GUARANTEED PEACE OF MIND
Your phone is covered by our 14 days no quibble money back promise.

ORDER NOW WITH YOUR CREDIT CARD DETAILS FOR FREE DELIVERY IN 4 WORKING DAYS

FREEPHONE 0500 000 888
CREDIT CARD ORDERING HOTLINE WEEKDAYS 9AM TO 9PM WEEKENDS 9AM TO 6PM

PLEASE HAVE YOUR CREDIT CARD AND THIS ADVERTISEMENT HANDY WHEN YOU CALL. Credit card orders are subject to our standard terms and conditions. We are unable to accept switch orders. Delivery is subject to a standard service contract for each phone with Vodafone. Direct Ltd. 185 Lower Baker Street, St. Pancras, London WC1N 1JL. © Copyright 1996. Reproduction prohibited.

A Special Announcement

An Autumn Visit to Southern Africa

including 6 nights at the 5-star deluxe Meikles Hotel & optional visits to Victoria Falls & Game Parks

A week away from £395.00

For seven departures only we shall be operating a special flight at an especially low tariff to the lovely city of Harare (formerly Salisbury), with its fine museums housing the artefacts of David Livingstone. We have a small number of seats available over the period allowing us to make a special offer of six nights in the famous and 5-star deluxe Meikles Hotel.

Besides visiting the many sights in and around Harare there are a host of excursion possibilities to the nearby game reserves and the highland areas such as Leopard's Rock. Excursions can be booked in advance to the tourist areas of the famous Victoria Falls (by air) and the Bully Vaughn Game Park. Alternatively you may wish to hire a car and explore the country independently.

This is a unique opportunity to visit southern Africa at a fraction of the normal tariff. The price includes return flights from London Gatwick to Harare, transfers and six nights' accommodation. Flights are non-stop, wide-bodied, scheduled seat configured Boeing 767 aircraft.

THE MEIKLES HOTEL, HARARE
Voted Africa's finest hotel, Meikles is centrally located in Harare. It has a host of public facilities including a swimming pool, a number of fine restaurants, a coffee shop, travel desk for local excursions and shops. The guest rooms are all air-conditioned with full facilities including TV. Travellers never fail to be impressed.

DEPARTURE DATES & PRICES
1996 Tuesdays per person in twin
Nov 5, 12 £430 - Nov 19, 26 £295 - Dec 3, 10, 17 £420
Single room supplement £195

Price includes return air travel, transfers, flights, accommodation at the Meikles Hotel. Not included: airport taxes, travel insurance, excursion programmes, meals during our early morning and afternoon excursions. All prices are subject to change if all bookings accepted subject to our Conditions of Booking, a copy of which is available on request.

0171-6161000

VJ

VOYAGES JULES VERNE
21 Dorset Square, London NW1 6GG
Travel Promotions Ltd. 0171-6161000
Our offices are open from 10.00am to 6.00pm weekdays. For personal callers, our office hours are 10am to 5pm weekdays only.

Silence from Number 10

Mr Major knows Mr Hamilton lied. Why so quiet?

SADLY, Neil Hamilton was "too busy" to attend a reception the Prime Minister invited him to at 10 Downing Street last night. It is a great loss to the picture archives. It would have completed the Hamilton triptych: Hamilton in Prussian lederhosen offering an amusing salute; Hamilton grinning with a gingerbread biscuit the day after the original Guardian allegations, and Hamilton being entertained by the boss he lied to in 1994. Better still would have been to have snapped him inside Downing Street sharing a joke with another guest, Michael Heseltine, the second boss he lied to in 1994. Such a set of pictures would have been a historical commentary on the moral standards of the Conservative Party in recent history.

The continued silence of Mr Major and Mr Heseltine on the Hamilton affair becomes more extraordinary by the day. Let us recap the most damning and easily proved lie that Mr Hamilton has told - the lie on the basis of which he was initially allowed to remain a Minister. On October 21 the Chief Whip interviewed Mr Hamilton and asked if there was anything he had not declared, or anything else which could embarrass the Government. He said there wasn't. The Deputy Prime Minister directly challenged him as to whether he had ever had any financial relationship with Ian Greer. He promised Mr Heseltine he hadn't. Mr Heseltine said that on the basis of this assurance it would have been unjust to sack Mr Hamilton from his role as Minister in charge of corporate probity. We now know that during the very period the Chief Whip and Mr Heseltine were interested in - the late 80s - Mr Greer did indeed have a financial relationship with Mr Greer, amounting to at least two payments totalling £10,000.

Mr Heseltine and Mr Major also now know all the facts relating to this en-

counter, yet they have said nothing and done nothing. If any other leader in the community - be they a policeman, a headmaster, a chief executive or a town clerk - did nothing about a senior employee who had probably lied to them they would forfeit any respect or trust. Mr Major, for all his lectures on moral standards in this country, cannot bring himself to utter so much as a batsqueak of disapproval. Some leader.

The proficiency of Mr Hamilton on moral standards in this country, cannot bring himself to utter so much as a batsqueak of disapproval. Some leader. The papers in the halted libel case stretches to 46 ring files. The High Court trial would have lasted a month and the evidence would have been tested by lawyers who had, between them, spent thousands of hours sifting through the facts, the inconsistencies and the lies. All this is now to be passed into the lone hands of Sir Gordon Downey, the man now charged with investigating allegations of sleaze.

What would have been publicly tested will now be privately examined. Sir Gordon's powers of subpoena and cross-examination have yet to be determined. Will witnesses be accompanied by their lawyers? Can he demand to cross-examine the Prime Minister? Can he subpoena the suppressed Central TV documentary on Ian Greer in which the sliken lobbyist admits that of course he arranged for MPs to ask questions (something he lied about - again - yesterday)? Can Sir Gordon's committee then separately call and cross-examine witnesses? Will that be in public or in private? The truth is that no-one knows: Sir Gordon is having to make much of it up as he goes along. It is, alas, an all too familiar British fudge.

Every recent attempt by a House of Commons Committee to investigate a misdemeanour by one of its members has ended up in farce or in a feeble reprimand. It is up to Sir Gordon to break this sorry pattern.

How to relieve the pain of poverty

Answer? Look away from Blackpool and towards Australia

IS THERE any future for universal benefits? The two best-known were both under attack at the Labour conference yesterday: pensions and child benefits. The platform was refusing to restore an earnings index for state pensioners and proposing to abolish child benefit for children aged 16 or over. Both groups have suffered serious reverses. There has been a threefold increase in child poverty since 1979. One out of three children now lives in a poor household as defined by the European Union - below half the national average income. Pensioner poverty has been camouflaged by the increase in average pension income. What this average hides is that while the top 20 per cent of pensioners have received a 70 per cent increase in income since 1979, the increase at the bottom is seven times smaller: a mere 10 per cent of a much smaller income. Proportionately - and shamefully - there are more pensioners in poverty today than there were in 1979.

Barbara Castle was right to be concerned by the erosion of the basic pension since its earnings-link was abolished by the Conservatives in 1960. Since then it has dropped from 21 per cent of average male earnings to 14 per cent today and is projected to shrink to a mere nine per cent by the year 2020. Single pensioners have lost £20-a-week - couples £30. But there is something worse than this general erosion - the widening inequality of elderly households. It is this very increase in in-

equality - the starkest for 100 years - that makes a universal approach such an inadequate response. Barbara Castle's plan included a 25-a-week increase for single pensioners and 28 for couples in compensation for the erosion. Her package would cost £3.5 billion. This is no way of relieving the poverty of the bottom 40 per cent: an extra 71p a day. Why give the affluent pensioner, already receiving sufficient to pay top rate tax, an extra 25-a-week when, with a more targeted approach, the bottom could receive five times that sum?

Gordon Brown's approach to child benefits already shows how much more you can give the poor if you are ready to be more radical. Instead of a child benefit of £10.80, poor families under the new plan could get three or four times as much through educational maintenance allowances. This would be a welcome - and all too rare - redistribution by Labour from the better-off to the poor. What is wrong with Labour's present pensions plan is that nothing is clear. Having had two separate reviews, it now wants a third. Its current plan is merely a tarted-up version of the present Tory scheme. Whoever wins yesterday's vote - the count will be announced today - both sides should look at the Australian approach. It too has means tests, but applied to top incomes rather than bottom. The better-off you are, the less basic pension and child benefit you get. That's the right road for universal benefits to take. Fair and redistributive.

Culture is off the agenda

The arts should be a Labour priority not a fringe activity

YOU WILL search in vain for the Labour Conference debates on the arts and cultural policy this week. There wasn't one last year either. And the blind spot is wider than that. Tony Blair's speech on Tuesday touched many bases but not a single remark about the arts. The arts are one of Britain's greatest glories, largest employers and biggest income earners. Most of the best social democratic governments of modern times - in Australia, France, Ireland and Sweden - have given the arts high priority. So why this silence from Labour?

It is not as if the arts are in blooming health. They have struggled for years to make the best of a mean-fisted and mean-minded cultural atmosphere, a situation which Lord Gowrie yesterday described as devastating. The need for a fresh start and fresh vision could not be greater. Mr Blair is supposedly an enthusiastic convert to Paul Keating's

high profile Creative Nation policy. Shadow ministers have been working on a beefed-up Keating-influenced strategy document for months now but its publication is still many weeks away. The arts is an area which ought to fit naturally into any Age of Achievement in a Blairite Young Country.

It is not enough to blame this frustrating situation on Jack Cunningham's low-key performance as shadow heritage secretary. Labour's failure so far to rise to the challenge on cultural policy is more general than that. It seems to speak of a lack of confidence, even a suspicion, about the arts. These are needless inhibitions. We have an unrivalled heritage and one of the best arts scenes in the world, as well as the inestimable good fortune of the English language. Cultural policy ought to be a natural priority for New Labour, not a subject fit only for the conference fringes.

COMPLAINTS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED ABOUT THE RELENTLESS NEGATIVE CANINE DEPICTION OF THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE LABOUR PARTY, SO STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO CORRECT THIS TENDENCY:

old new Labour



Letters to the Editor

Where the living is sleazy

I WANT to congratulate you on an excellent piece of investigative journalism (Hamilton admits: I took money, October 2). This must be a fillip to all those who wish to see our parliamentary democracy shaken up and cleaned up.

Due to your work, others of Mr Hamilton's ilk must now be scurrying for the nearest rock pool.

D John, 20 Bensham Lane, Croydon CR9 2RQ.

HAS Neil Hamilton ever asked for or taken advice from public-relations people? It is quite obvious that the most effective PR for Mr Hamilton is for him not to appear in public and certainly not allow himself to be interviewed on television.

I am sure if Mr Hamilton were offered enough money he would wear a label around his neck that simply said, "I am a Tory". This would virtually guarantee a Labour victory in the general election.

Paul Spelman, 2 Redcar Road, Guisborough, Cleveland TS14 6DE.

SURELY it's immaterial who makes donations into any constituency party's funds, particularly on the small scale you report. These funds would have been used to buy tables and chairs and computers etc; and while they might make the constituency more efficient, they were not for the personal use of the MP concerned. Too many stones are being turned over to fuel indignation largely created by the media. Let's return to more positive forms of report-

ing to elevate the political debate. M J Amor, White House, High Street, Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire HP27 0AE.

I WOULD be happy to contribute a few quid to Neil Hamilton's defence fund if it would allow more truth to be revealed. Anybody else in? John Wood, 74 Weston Park, London N8 9TB.

A FEW years ago, the Italian Christian Democrats and Socialists were found to be riddled with corruption. Such was the revulsion felt by the Italian people that they brought sufficient pressure to bear to ensure that both parties were disbanded. Surely the time has come for the British people to exert similar pressure on the Tories? Walter Cairns, Broomhurst Hall, 836 Winslow Road, Manchester M20 8RP.

I APPLAUD your campaign to expose MPs taking money to ask parliamentary questions. Now is the time for

the free press to exact accountability of politicians, when so few other avenues are open. Chris E Jones, 33 Whoberley Avenue, Chislehurst, Croydon CV5 8ER.

IF Mr Hamilton really had a good case and only shortage of funds prevented him pursuing it, then I find it hard to believe that "sources close to the Conservative Party" would not assist him financially to continue. Surely it is far more likely that further sleaze would be revealed in court causing huge embarrassment to the Government and the party. (Dr) Crystal Romilly, 28 St Johns Hill Grove, London SW11 2RG.

THANK you for a wonderful front page (A liar and a cheat, October 1). If it was "The Sun Wot Won It", with any luck posterity will record "and the Guardian wot got 'em out". George Warwicker, 14 Godwin Road, Epsom, Surrey, Surrey KT8 2LQ.

Protest reaches Fever Pitch

HOW pertinent of Kim Howells to observe that the British film industry is run by "a small, miserable bunch of chattering classes... ashamed to be associated with hugely profitable films like Independence Day or Twister" (End of socialism: MP finds new target in attack on British filmmakers for shunning blockbuster, October 1).

I have recently had first-hand experience of this miserabilist tendency. When I was adapting my book Fever Pitch for the cinema, I made it quite clear in the script that I wanted both alien spacecraft and hurricanes to feature prominently, in order to make the film a sure-fire commercial success. The grim elitists at Channel 4 Films, however, insisted on the removal of all crowd-pleasing elements, citing - pah! - budgetary restrictions, even though we had nearly £2 million to play with. (True, Independence Day had a budget 30 or 40 times the size, but then I only wanted small space-craft.) I understand that screenwriters Richard Curtis (Four Weddings and a Funeral) and John Hodge (Trainspotting) had the same difficulty, and as a predictable consequence both films dismally failed to capture the public's imagination.

If anyone says anything sillier in Blackpool, you wouldn't want to hear it; one can only hope, for Mr Blair's sake, that his other colleagues show a better grasp of contemporary economic realities than the hapless Dr Howells. Nick Hornby, c/o Peters Fraser and Dunlop, 508 The Chambers, Chelsea Harbour, London SW10 0XF.

Bad language

FURTHER to your correspondence on modern bollocks-speak (Letters, October 2), don't forget these classics: "You phone the Red Lion and are told: 'Thank you for calling the Crowned Red Lion Panoramic Plaza; Tracy speak, how may I help you?'"

You are relaxing at home after a hard day's work when Jason phones, saying it's "a courtesy call" to tell you his double-glazing men are in the area. Julie Harrison, 49 Molewood Road, Hertford SG14 3AQ.

Please include a full postal address, even on e-mailed letters, and a telephone number.

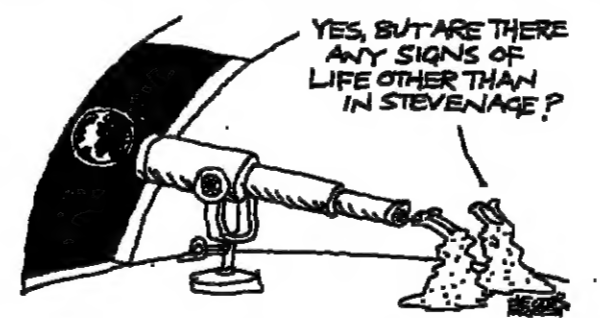
A local writes

RICHARD Thomas paints a picture of Stevenage unrecognisable to those of us who live here (Coy responses to Blair's New advance, September 30).

The town centre is not "empty at night". The recently opened Stevenage Leisure Park has two new nightclubs, a modern twelve-screen cinema and a string of restaurants that are buzzing with activity every evening of the week. Our "sunken pedestrian pathways" are walkways and cycle tracks that enable us to go anywhere in the town without crossing busy main roads.

His informant is wrong to imply that I would not go into the Poacher pub. On the contrary, as it happens to be next door to the Bedwell Community Centre, where they hold Labour Party meetings, I must have been in there 20 times.

They have recently renovated the Poachers. Like the



rest of our town, it likes to stay right up to date. Barbara Follett, (Labour PPC, Stevenage), c/o 4 Popple Way, Stevenage, Herts SG1 3TG.

We may edit letters; shorter ones are more likely to appear.

But is it art?

LISA Jardine (Women, October 1) mentions only a single work by a single sculptor in the Jesus College exhibition, and portrays the college fellowship as hostile to art, "elderly dons... huffing and puffing, parading their smug philistinism and resistance to the modern".

She fails to mention that this same fellowship, year after year, has invited the college's Works of Art Committee to organise our sculpture exhibitions, has commissioned the astonishingly beautiful Quintenary Library, and has enhanced it with sculptures by Antony Gormley and Sir Eduardo Paolozzi. She does not mention that Richard Long has since twice been invited to participate again. She does not mention our growing art collection, the vitality of the student-run Visual Art Society, or several artists' generosity to the college.

You have yourself, Sir, perhaps correctly assessed the tenor of Prof Jardine's writing by printing it on your Women's Page, and in illustrating it with a photograph of Prof Jardine herself in place of one of the IT artists. (Prof) Lord Readeaux, Master, Jesus College, Cambridge CB5 8BL.

New vows, new covenant, new vacuity

WE have had more than enough Messiahs (Blair spells out his 'Age of Achievement' for Britain, October 2). Stange how they all have the same message: the poor are always with you. I thought the Labour Party existed to provide loaves and fishes - not the National Lottery. John N French, 21 Monmouth Street, Bristol BS3 4SJ.

Yet there is a way out, and it lies in Tony Blair's vow to "build a new relationship in Europe." The EU is a powerful bloc of more than 250 million consumers and savers which could face down the destructive juggernaut of globalisation. A Labour government could, by linking up with socialist parties throughout Europe, take on the transnational companies and international financiers. Colin Hines, 11 Park House Gardens, East Twickenham, Middlesex TW1 2DF.

education, a sector regarded as the Cinderella of the education service.

Tony, please don't forget us. We bring opportunities to the under-25s who did not achieve their potential in schools. If ending youth unemployment is to be a national priority, further education must be adequately funded in order to provide the necessary high-quality education and training. Barbara Boyce, (PPC, Harrogate and Knaresborough), 179 Wickersley Road, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S60 4JP.

TWO FEET-foot-high images of Tony Blair, red banners cascading round the conference-hall balcony, "new social order", an "iron chancellor", and talk of preparing for "a thousand years". I know Labour has moved to the right, but this is ridiculous. Dan Falchikov, Warwick House, Acre Road, Kingston KT2.

I AM a prospective Labour Party Parliamentary Candidate who should be in Blackpool with my colleagues this week. Unfortunately, there was no one else to do my job. I teach in a college of further

A Country Diary

STRATHNAIRN: Tibbles - as she came to be called - was probably dumped in the strath and we saw the cat for the first time in the autumn of last year. At first she would not come for food although she regularly visited the garden where she ignored all the poultry and, as far as we could see, the wild birds. How she managed to survive last winter is a mystery as, in January, temperatures dropped to minus 26 degrees. Then a few months ago she started to visit the garden more and more nonchalantly, dashing the five miniature leshunds when they went walkabout. Then a few weeks ago she started coming for food when her name was called but she would not come too close. Tibbles always left the garden in the same direction and then we saw her three kittens in woodland half a mile away. The tiny kittens were so young they were unable to survive as, despite being mid-September, some nights the temperature had already dropped to minus 15 degrees. There was also the

fact that the cat would simply carry on having more kittens. Following consultation with the RSPCA and the Cat Rescue we decided to trap Tibbles and a piece of quail meat enticed her into a humane trap and she was then placed in my study. It took half an hour to find the kittens because, although the first one was asleep in long grass, the other two were four feet down a rabbit hole. They were soon reunited with their mother. The first thing Tibbles did was to clean up the kittens and, to our amazement, all three were pure white. She then introduced them to the dirt box and they have used it ever since. Homes will have to be found for all three kittens and then Tibbles will be taken to the vet for an operation. After that, if she wants to come in, so be it, as she can join our four other cats. As I write this, Tibbles is trying to get some sleep but with three kittens bouncing around the room she has little chance. RAY COLLIER

Diary

Matthew Norman

Blackpool, a fierce battle has been waged between Labour, Old and New. At a cable-company reception on Monday, some Scottish MPs — not modernisers — were chatting when a young man stumbled towards them, knocked three glasses of red wine on to the carpet and sat in the puddle. "Who the f--- are you?" he said to someone politely suggesting he stand up, and when Paisley North MP Irene Adams intervened, he looked at her badge and intoned: "It's people like me who get people like you elected."

Elections are still the basis of democracy

Commentary

Hugo Young

THERE is a cloud over the serenity at Blackpool. It consists, probably, of the Italian Budget, and its shape is larger than Tony Blair's triumphant hand. Italy has announced a huge cut in its planned fiscal deficit. Spain is taking a similar track. The Mediterranean, and not just the northerners, are getting ready to scramble into the single currency. The EMU project is becoming less abstract and more inclusive.

rency plan is crowding out the economic hazards it entails. Instead of being able to bet on some kind of equal stand-off between ins and outs, a British policy biased in favour of self-exclusion looks more likely to be played in dangerous isolation.

How is Labour addressing this? Partly by wishful evasion. Robin Cook pleased the party by speaking of the need to fit the currency regime into the real economy and not just a bankers' ramp. An employment criterion, to be added to the fiscal and monetary criteria, is the easy and obvious aspiration of the left, and has become the test any Labour speaker on this subject has to pass. But Mr Cook is careful with words. Although he talks about employment, he says it must be an "objective" not a criterion. And so say all of us. We helpfully learn that tampering with Maastricht is neither a realistic nor a desired pre-condition of Labour's approach to EMU.

The leadership is in a complex box. Let us leave aside the party politics. These cannot be ignored, because a core of MPs is always likely to oppose EMU at any price. But assuming Mr Blair could handle them, and wanted to keep strenuously open Britain's chance of joining the enterprise that now seems more likely to embrace a majority not a minority of EU members, he faces serious constraints.

The case for his indecision is the same as for Kenneth Clarke's. We can be certain that up to and beyond the election, the crucial components of a decision will remain unavailable. Who will join, on what terms, under what investigatory regime, at exactly what date, all this will stay unanswered even as the general momentum carries the project forward. As a matter of national prudence, not merely party tactics, the case against any final commitment is strong.

Another layer of doubt envelops the matter of consent. Mr Blair said in his speech: "Any change will only come with the full consent of the people." He carefully repeats that this could be issued by either a referendum or an election. He therefore does not agree, yet, that the single currency decision is so overwhelmingly momentous that the only proper legitimisation can come through putting the specific question to the nation. This is a prudent caveat: a bold and necessary rejection, thus far, of the Tory hysteria which pushed the Government to make that promise last April.

A referendum presents problems of a technical as well as political nature. The assumption is that it would be held after the shape of the EMU proposition had been finalised, and a decision on sterling was awaited. Nobody has yet explained how, in those circumstances, a six-week campaign could be conducted without offering an overwhelming inducement to all holders of sterling to hedge themselves against a No vote and get out of the currency before it is established as an incurably weak sister of the Euro. Unless Labour is more careful than the Tories, it could find itself saddled with an inescapable pledge which comes close to being a guarantee that Britain stays out — owing to the awesome risks entailed in the very holding of the referendum. While staying out of the first wave might make sense if the entrants were few, staying out of what turns out to be the next majority project of the developed EU would have a disastrous impact on the national interest.

do what it thought right and could get through Parliament. A second consent-test should also be taken seriously. It is called the General Election. Mr Blair's continual reminder that consent and mandate are what elections are about is a commendable message to those who decry the quality of modern democracy. Have we given up on them as the key legitimiser of the biggest decisions?

Staying out of the next project of the developed EU would have a disastrous impact

age emerges from the Inter-Governmental Conference as a focal issue through which to establish the general public will on Britain's continuing membership of the EU. Such a referendum, properly handled, could be called to settle once and for all a question that has foreclosed any rational foreign policy since the last election. It could canvass the single currency issue, but in the wider context of the EU's future. Instead of imperilling sterling after the EU had made its decision, it would confer on the Government a mandate to

This document damns China over Tibet



Isabel Hilton

IT WAS National Day in the People's Republic of China this week, the annual celebration of nearly five decades of achievement under the wise leadership of the Communist Party. Nationalism was the theme, thousands of people attended a dawn flag-raising ceremony in Tiananmen Square, and a People's Daily editorial underscored, for those who had missed it, the message of the moment. "Nationalism... can bring into full play the potential of all nationalities. [It] is the most effective way of cementing the strength of all nationalities... to create great undertakings that will shake heaven and earth," it said. The People's Daily published a front-page colour photograph of the eight-year-old child whom the Chinese government had imposed upon Tibet as the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama. Tibet's second-highest religious authority, the boy chosen by the Dalai Lama, the Tibetans' spiritual leader, has vanished. Beijing was trumpeting its achievements, but Tibet is suffering another wave of political persecution as the government seeks to prise loose the people's devotion to their absent Dalai Lama. The Chinese say that the late 10th Panchen Lama, who died in 1989, and his Party-sanctioned reincarnation are supporters of the Chinese occupation of Tibet, while the Dalai Lama is a traitor to Tibet and, even less plausibly, to his religion. The fitting leader for Tibet, the message runs, is therefore the Panchen Lama.

ture. "If language, clothes and camps are taken away," he wrote, "then people will vanish. How can we guarantee that Tibetans will not be turned into another race?"

The Panchen Lama was born in the north-west province of Qinghai, as was the present Dalai Lama. After their victory in 1949 the Chinese divided Tibet: one third they named the Tibet Autonomous Region and promised it would enjoy an earlier version of the "one country, two systems" style of government that is now promised to Hong Kong. The rest was divided between several Chinese provinces, including Qinghai. The Chinese agreed not to reform the Tibet Autonomous Region, but no such restraints applied to the rest.

Qinghai has never recovered from what was done to it and its peoples in the 50s: nomads were forcibly settled on the high plateau with its thin soil. The result was mass starvation and desertification. Monasteries were destroyed and the monks and nuns forced out. Rebellion followed, and was savagely put down; thousands died in the Labour camps. It was the time Mao declared that China's old catch the West up in 15 years, if only his magic prescriptions were followed. Some in the Communist Party hierarchy grew worried and tried to restrain Mao and reverse his policies. They encouraged the young Panchen Lama, until then an admirer of the Chinese leadership, to write his report, hoping to use it against Mao. After a long investigation, and over the protesting heads of close advisers, the Panchen Lama went ahead.

But Mao won the inner party battle and the Panchen Lama paid for his temerity with more than a decade and a half of prison. Even today the Chinese government continues to hide the truth about that era: millions throughout China died of starvation, but for decades it has been blamed on "natural disaster". And just as today the Beijing leadership claims that Tibet enjoys religious freedom, they also pretend that Tibet's rich religious culture was destroyed in the Cultural Revolution, now pronounced one of Mao's "mistakes" rather than in the late 50s and early 60s. That period has not been judged a "mistake" because that judgment would stand as a condemnation of Deng Xiaoping and the others who share the responsibility for the millions of deaths and broken lives they caused.

The Chinese government claimed that the late Panchen Lama "loved the party", but as the document reveals, after only a decade of Chinese rule, the Panchen Lama was bitterly disillusioned. It is more than 30 years since his report. Tibetans are still being arrested, tortured and persecuted for their beliefs. And in Beijing, the band plays on.

But a document that has remained secret for more than 30 years and which has now come out of China reveals what the late Panchen Lama really thought of the fate of his country under the Chinese. It is one of the longest, most detailed and most bitter descriptions ever written about the devastation resulting from Chinese policies.

"In many parts of Tibet," he wrote, "people have starved to death. In some places, whole families have perished and the death rate is very high. This is very abnormal, horrible and grave. In the past, Tibet lived with a dark, barbaric feudalism, but there was never such shortage of food."

The document is a 70,000-word letter the late Panchen Lama wrote to Chairman Mao in 1962 in a desperate attempt to persuade Mao to modify the policies that threatened to extinguish a people and its cul-



test reaches er Pitch

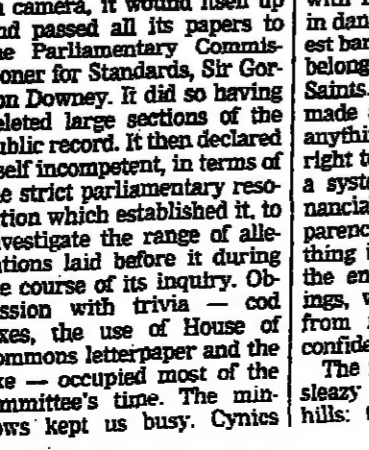
LEGAL problems may yet haunt Mr Tony Blair's rousing conference speech. His witty adaptation of Euro 96 anthem Three Lions ("Seventeen years of hurt/ never stopped us dreaming/ Labour's coming home") was splendid, but when Martin Rowson put the line "Football's bugged off" in a Guardian cartoon in June, Chrysalis records claimed breach of copyright (they settled for three signed copies of the cartoon). Chrysalis yesterday denied giving Mr Blair consent, and said they planned to study the speech closely before deciding what to do.

THE appeal for facts about Christopher Eccleston, the man whose fear of publicity drove him into TV acting, comes along well. We have learned that Mr Eccleston lives in a Hampstead news house and that his drama teacher in Manchester told him he wouldn't make it as an actor because his nose was too big. Robert Crampston wins champagne for his fact... that his interview with the actor, in which he refused to state his father's job, appeared not in the Independent but the Times.

SPAKING of which, it is good to see the old Thunderer avoiding the lure of self-importance. Senior executives and European experts were summoned to a "think tank" last week by editor Peter Stothard, who explained that his purpose was to find a plan to derail European Monetary Union. After much sucking of pencils, the sole masterplan to emerge was a batty scheme to encourage a Labour government to ruin EMU by insisting on impossibly tough convergence rules. An article to this effect duly appeared on Saturday under the byline of George Brock. It's not much, but who knows... acorns and oak trees, and all that rot.

IN the Mail on Sunday, that sweet-natured old soul John Junor has been considering the behaviour of Chris Evans, who he says has "limited talent". A fortnight ago, it was Liam Gallagher whom Sir John (writing, as always, only after copious research) dismissed as having "minimal talent". Sir John wasn't answering the phone yesterday (he was at a Kula Shaker recording session, apparently, on percussion), but we hope to confirm his shock move to the Melody Maker very soon.

OBSERVED in Blackpool yesterday was a touching scene, as a round man approached the Observer's Andrew Rawnsley outside the Imperial Hotel, and began to ramble effusively about how wonderful the Guardian is. Mr Rawnsley accepted the praise with good grace, before asking what the man so admired. "I'm the Labour candidate for Tatton," he explained. "Neil Hamilton's constituency..."



language



Cleaning up the sleaze

David Alton is appalled by Parliament's inept attempts so far to clean the stables — but warns that in the end we get the public service we deserve

IN THE 1970s management trainees were shown a training film. Meetings. Bloody Meetings. John Cleese parodied the ineffectual and relentless rounds of meetings into which we are all so easily sucked. In politics, the meeting is an occupational hazard — and an extremely easy way to obstruct. Rather than act, what better course of action than to convene a series of meetings or to set up a committee of inquiry? The more controversial the issue, the grander the committee.

For the best part of two years, Parliament's senior committee, the House of Commons Committee of Privileges, inquired into the cash-for-questions scandal. At the end of its deliberations, held in camera, it would itself up and passed all its papers to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, Sir Gordon Downey. It did so having deleted large sections of the public record. It then declared itself incompetent, in terms of the strict parliamentary resolution which established it to investigate the range of allegations laid before it during the course of its inquiry. Cod session with House of Commons letterpaper and the like occupied most of the committee's time. The minutes kept us busy. Cynics

might question whether this was simply an exercise in distraction. I dissented from the committee's report because we failed to discharge our duty to Parliament and to lay finally to rest the ghost of improper financial involvement. More importantly, we had nothing to say about the causes of financial sleaze or about political ethics.

Thoreau once observed that if you cut down all the trees there will be nowhere left for the birds to sing. So deep is the level of disenchantment with Parliament that we are in danger of stripping the forest bare. None of us in politics belongs to the Communion of Saints. The man who never made a mistake never made anything. But the public has a right to expect MPs to deliver a system that guarantees financial rectitude and transparency. The extraordinary thing is that after Nolan and the endless committee hearings, we are still some way from re-establishing public confidence.

The motivation behind our sleazy state is as old as the hills: the pursuit of power, personal aggrandisement and the protection of privilege. We have passed through a decade in which unbridled individualism has been cultivated, while rapacious competitiveness has been encouraged as good business practice. As Government has promoted this at the expense of an ethic of public service, so the values of the financial jungle have become the civic values of our own time. The real tragedy is that most politicians do not regard such amorality as corrupt or have any understanding of the extent of public cynicism. As this cynicism reaches new depths it is time for a new civic reckoning. Tolerance of a corrupt system is the greatest danger to this process. In Parliament we must face the contradiction of the rules which forbid MPs from ac-

ship with Alan Rusbridger because you buy the Guardian. Since Nolan, an interest must be registered before it becomes operative, but new interests or changes should also be printed on the front page of the Order Paper for all to see. MPs just do not have the time to monitor the register on a daily basis.

In local government, Parliament requires councillors to declare their interests and to withdraw from relevant debates. The same standards must be imposed on Parliament itself, and government, with all the financial penalties for dishonesty that go with them.

At every election, candidates distribute an election address, free of charge, courtesy of the Post Office. It should be mandatory to include on this address a decla-

tion of financial interests. This would put the possibility of a conflict firmly before the voting public. The electors might also reflect on the amount of time an MP with large financial interests will have left to serve them.

Parliament itself will want to reserve the right to deal with MPs who breach its rules. But the Committee on Members' Interests and Privileges and the Parliamentary Ombudsman have yet to demonstrate that they have the resolve or the powers required to put an end to what John Major rightly described as a "hiring fair".

It is intolerable that investi-

Renewing your home insurance in October or November? If you are 50 or over, just see how much you could save with Saga - call us NOW. Insurance cover is comprehensive and low cost. Discounts for home security. Free pen with your quotation. Call us today. For your free no obligation quote simply call us on the number below. We will be pleased to answer any questions you have on SAGA Home Insurance. 0800 414 525 ref.GU0601. SAGA Services Ltd. Lines open Monday to Friday. 9am - 6pm, Saturdays 9am - 1pm. SAGA Services Ltd would like to send you information about services provided by other SAGA companies and more case details to these companies to enable them to do so. And why not ask us about our competitive MOTOR INSURANCE.

OF THE TENDENCY. ... test reaches er Pitch ... language

Robert Bourassa

Riding tigers in Quebec

AS PREMIER of Quebec Robert Bourassa, who has died aged 68, used cunning, concessions and wily political manoeuvring to thwart outright separatists in the province but failed to quench smouldering nationalist fires. Twice premier, from 1970 to 1976 and from 1985 until 1994, Bourassa faced two of the worst crises to beset modern Quebec and left a patchwork legacy that includes the much-reviled language laws and the massive northern hydroelectric projects which pour power into the north-eastern United States.

Widely regarded by Canadians outside Quebec as a closet separatist, Bourassa made ambiguity into a political asset, espousing neither the federalist status quo nor Quebec separation while trying to assuage Francophone nationalist sentiments by creating a nation within a state. In that, he reflected the mixed emotions of many Quebecers, torn between a sense of national destiny and the security of the Canadian umbrella.

Canada's Liberal prime minister Jean Chrétien paid tribute to Bourassa yesterday while conceding that the two often differed sharply over how to address Quebec's demands. "We didn't always agree. That's politics," said Chrétien. "But this isn't the time to dredge up political quarrels. I think we should pay homage to a man who gave his life to the public service, a good worker, who always sought solutions to the problems facing him."

Soon after Bourassa became leader of the provincial Liberal Party in 1970, and Quebec's youngest ever premier at 36, Quebec was plunged into the "October crisis", when a small group of Front de libération du Québec terrorists kidnapped British trade commissioner James Cross and Pierre Laporte, a Liberal cabinet minister. Laporte was murdered. Cross was eventually freed but not before the then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, claiming Quebec faced an "insurrection" imposed the War Measures Act, suspended civil liberties and deployed thousands of troops across Quebec.

In the aftermath of the October crisis, Bourassa, who had allowed hundreds to be



Middle man... Robert Bourassa struggled with conflicting forces PHOTOGRAPH: ANDRÉ PICHETTE

arrested in the province, was accused of cowardice and of being Trudeau's lap dog. Two decades later Bourassa was hailed for his courage and steady nerve when an Indian land claims crisis turned violent and Mohawks barricaded themselves into a compound at Oka, near Montreal. Again the army was deployed in force but despite a tense summer-long siege, Bourassa managed to avoid a bloodbath and the crisis was resolved peacefully.

Oka also was a brutal test of his personal priorities. A sun-lover who spent long vacations in Florida and, when it was warm enough, would pore over official documents on the roof of his Quebec City office, Bourassa had been diagnosed with malignant melanoma just before the Oka crisis began but, against his doctor's advice, postponed treatment for months until it had ended.

Later he would explain that "any soldier who goes into battle does so at the peril of his own life and that applies to a head of state." Yet while to one he denied his personal courage, few saw Bourassa as either a soldier or a head of state. His public persona was stiff, almost wooden, especially when he was speaking English, and his ambiguous shifting to deal with the irreconcilable demands of a province deeply split between separatists and federalists satisfied neither.

Quebec's large English-speaking minority and most of its immigrant population never forgave him for Bill 22, the first of the controversial language laws which made French the only official language in Quebec and severely restricted access to English schools. At the same time the law infuriated the French-speaking majority, which felt it didn't do enough to protect and promote the French language.

Bill 22, in the words of one of his own backbenchers, made Bourassa "the most hated man in Quebec" and led to a humiliating election defeat in 1976 at the hands of the separatist Parti Québécois. Bourassa quit his political career and moved to his home in the village of St-Jovite, where he lived until his death. He also spent time in Brussels, studying the then European Community and its emerging notions of a loose

Pat McGeown

Child of the Troubles who grew into politics

THE DEATH of Sinn Féin councillor Pat McGeown at the age of 40 arguably brings the number of Provisional Irish Republican Army volunteers who died as a result of the 1981 hunger strike to 11. The damage caused to his health by 42 days without food resulted in heart disease which finally caught up with him.

The 1981 hunger strikes were organised by Republican prisoners campaigning for "political" status. They were a turning point for the Provisionals, because the action showed the organisation that a political movement could be built which might replace the futile goal of removing the British state from Ireland by force. But it was a lesson taught at a terrible cost to individuals and their families.

McGeown, who was serving a 15-year sentence for his part in one of many bombings of Belfast's Europa Hotel, had left instructions that if he lapsed into coma he was not to be removed from the hunger strike until his death. But the efforts of the civil rights campaigner Father Denis Paul to get the families to intervene and end the senseless deaths paid off.

On August 20 McGeown had lapsed into unconsciousness. His wife Pauline was at his bedside and recalled: "Pat took bad and started convulsing in pain. I could not bear the sight of him suffering so much and decided to call on medical supervision to relieve his agony." He was the last IRA man to venture so close to death through starvation, but the experience seriously damaged his health.

On his 1985 release he involved himself in the IRA's political wing and was elected Sinn Féin councillor for Lower Falls. He rose to lead Sinn Féin as the largest group on Belfast City Council and was elected to the May 30 elections when the party gained its highest ever share of the vote, 15.5 per cent.

McGeown was a child of the Troubles, manning Falls Road barricades in west Belfast at the age of 10 and a member of the Flanna Éireann, the IRA's junior wing, at 13. By his 15th birthday he had already seen his first dead body, that of fellow Flanna member Gerard McAuley, who was shot dead as loyalists attacked the Clonard Street area. Pat's father Joseph at first thought that his son was the victim because they were so similarly dressed.

He was briefly imprisoned in the Irish Republic for explosives offences when he was

14. At 18 he was interned for 18 months and shortly after his 1975 release came that final imprisonment. By the time of his 1986 release, apart from the hunger strike he had spent several years on the "blanket" protest.

When he joined the IRA, volunteers were plentiful among the young without a stake in society, McGeown told writer Liam Clarke 10 years ago. The massive influx of British troops and the resulting harassment "created an atmosphere of violence and the desire to fight back... initially it's responsive." And, he added, "you don't need to go outside your area, you don't need to go outside a house to make a bomb. It's a fairly straightforward technical sort of subject."

As Sinn Féin Belfast council leader he managed to form strong friendships outside the Republican movement and even across the traditional religious divide. In spite of their diametrically opposed politics he became a good friend of Billy Hutchinson, the Progressive Unionist Party talks delegate who served a sentence for murdering a Catholic while a member of the Ulster Volunteer Force. To some the relationship proved that the working classes of Belfast have more in common than what divides them.

The Social Democrat and Labour party councillor Alex Attwood was also close to McGeown. "At times he was dogmatic but he was, of all of them, the one who tried to lis-

ten to the other side," said Attwood. "You could disagree with Pat but you could never dispute that he passionately believed in his politics."

ten to the other side," said Attwood. "You could disagree with Pat but you could never dispute that he passionately believed in his politics."



To the campaign... Pat McGeown PHOTOGRAPH: PAUL FAITH

Frances Lear

The feminist rebellion of a Hollywood wife

FRANCES Lear, who has died aged 73, was a self-made media entrepreneur, writer, feminist, multi-media enthusiast, multi-millionaire and former Hollywood wife.

Petite, elegant and known for her gutsiness, her outspokenness and her volatility, Lear launched herself into the media world in 1968, when she put \$25 million of her divorce settlement into starting up a magazine named after herself. In a publishing world where women's magazines were run by men and filled with images of young models, diets and man-eating tips, Lear's magazine targeted at intelligent, affluent women over 40. Women who, as the magazine's slogan put it, "weren't born yesterday."

Lear's enormous wealth — estimated at between \$100 and \$112 million — was the result



Starmy... Frances Lear

of a divorce agreement made after 28 years of marriage to Hollywood magnate, Norman Lear. He was the third of Frances's husbands; the first two marriages were short-lived. When her second husband was unfaithful to her she made the first of three

suicide attempts and spent three weeks in a psychiatric hospital. In later years she spoke candidly about her bouts of manic depression. In an autobiography, *The Second Seduction*, she also wrote about being sexually abused by her stepfather from the age of 12, her alcoholism and drug taking. Her magazine published hard-hitting features on issues such as incest and domestic violence, several with personal accounts written by herself.

When she met Norman Lear in 1968, Frances had already tried a number of jobs in advertising and retailing. She willingly gave up a post as a department store sports-wear buyer to move with Lear to California, where she started home and raised two daughters.

But as she became more successful through the 1970s, ac-

quiring a movie studio and founding a civil liberties organisation, People for the American Way, Frances felt herself increasingly overshadowed. In a New York Times article in 1981, she wrote about how a woman in Hollywood is a non-person "unless she is under 21, powerful, or a star." Being a Hollywood wife was to be invisible. Lear felt, and that was something she was determined not to be. When she realised that, as she put it, "we had become her," she decided to leave the marriage.

During the six years that she masterminded Lear's, circulation doubled from its initial 250,000. But her temperamental nature, her autocratic style and fast-changing stable of editors and writers remained much criticised in media circles. Caroline Miller, Lear's final editor-in-

chief, described working with Lear as "always an adventure — a terror but worth it."

Lear's ceased publication in March 1994, largely because, associates say, Lear herself had lost interest. By then she was making videos for women, geared to subjects like legal rights and personal finance. She also wrote *Frances Lear's Guide to Work and Family in the 21st Century*, which is still awaiting publication.

She often said that the second half of her life was far better than the first, and she spoke freely and proudly about her colourful love-life, especially late in her life, about a succession of much younger lovers. But her most consistent passion was feminism.

In the 1970s, she worked for Democratic candidates in feminist platforms, in the early 1980s for the National

Organisation for Women to pass the Equal Rights Amendment, and she directed her writing towards helping women make positive changes in their lives.

"Victimisation had always been my identity. The change came with the women's movement and it changed my life," she told the Guardian in 1992. "It occurred to me in the 1970s that I didn't have to be unhappy. I could find my own voice and live my own life."

The women's movement, in time, will change the lives of all women throughout the world, her younger interviewer added. "You are living my legacy. How dare you not appreciate it?"

Frances Lear, born July 14, 1925; died September 30, 1998

Birthdays

Sir Stephen Brown, President of the Family Division, 72; Christopher Bruce, dancer and choreographer, 51; Chubby Checker, rock singer, 55; Lord Denham, former Conservative Whip, House of Lords, 69; Roger Hargreaves, author of *Maurice Mole*, 85; Sir Terence English, cardiologist, surgeon, master, St Catherine's College, Cambridge, 64; Prof Philippa Foot, philosopher, 78; Neale Fraser, former tennis player, 77; Sir Roger Hargreaves, ambassador to Mexico, 62; Lord Knights, former chief constable, West Midlands, 76; Ruggero Romano, 68; Sir Shridath (Sonny) Ramphal QC, former Commonwealth secretary-general, 68; Tim Melville-Ross, director-general, Institute of Directors, 62; Steve Reich, composer, 60; John Sutherland, jockey, 44; Gore Vidal, author, 71; Judge Monique Viner, QC, 70; George Wein, jazz musician, impresario, 71.

Death Notices

HOOG, Justice Roy of Ashington, Northumberland, died on September 28th aged 82. He was a devoted family man. You can contact David Hoog on 01670 811111.

MILN, Kenneth Arthur, September 30th, 1998, peacefully in hospital aged 90. He was a devoted family man. You can contact David Hoog on 01670 811111.

WILSON, David, died 30 September 1998 after a long illness. He was a devoted family man. You can contact David Hoog on 01670 811111.

WILSON, David, died 30 September 1998 after a long illness. He was a devoted family man. You can contact David Hoog on 01670 811111.

Jackdaw



Jackdaw
A news agency report quotes the US Humane Society as saying: "It's going to encourage owners to have their dogs neutered, then fine."

Fire escape
DON'T DROP THE CIGARETTE ENDS IN THE WASTE PAPER BASKETS OR SOMEWHERE ELSE AND VERIFY THE THING THE WHOLE TIME OF YOUR LIVING IN THE HOTEL. IT IS OF GREAT UTILITY FOR US THE OPERATIVE AND PROMPT ANNOUNCING ANY FIRE BEGINNING OBSERVED IN THE NEARNESS.

Birth thangs
IT IS A common narcissistic fantasy to believe that the world as we know it started with our own birth, and that

prior to our appearance all was darkness and antiquity. My particular generation — located at the heart of the baby-boomers, roughly midway between President Clinton and Madonna — has taken this tendency to an extreme. We would be likely to believe that no one before us had argued for school desegregation, worried about the political masses, lived in split-level houses, used automated tools, got sick because of mislabelling, got well because of tetracycline, slept on Posturepedic beds, favoured clitoral sex, laughed at Scientology, mocked Interpol, complained about wolf-whistles, turned from the vomitous rubberiness of US cooking to the splendours of misères of tapenade, consumed hallucinogenic drugs, taken over multi-use college buildings to protest unjust wars, or elsewhere indulge in a widespread habit of loud public gibbiness.

Wendy Lesser broods on the conviction of the personal into the psychological in the *London Review of Books*.

Fear of flying
IF YOU are a "nervous flier," immediately swallow enough Valium to induce hibernation in a polar bear. (Be sure to attach somewhere to your person a highly visible note indicating your final destination, contact numbers, blood type, etc. in the event that they cannot revive you when it is time to deplane.)

If you are susceptible to motion sickness, colour-coordinate your clothing with the meal you ate beforehand. To take your mind off the fact that it now looks as though the pilot will have to go through the thunderstorm, close your eyes and try to imagine that you are Charles Lindbergh and that this is the adventure of a lifetime. Soon you will land at Le Bourget field and be carried off by hordes of adoring French people shouting nice things about America. (Far fetched admittedly.)

Christopher Buckley explores the joys of small planes and major traumas for the New Yorker.

Very small talk
Models: "Do you do mostly print or catwalk?" If she answers "print", express admiration. If she says "catwalk", express admiration. If she says "showroom", express admiration. "Do you have your head shot with you?" Her head shot is a photograph of her face. Look at it for a long time, then say: "Nice commercial shot, but it doesn't capture your tremendous presence." Deep! Farmers: "How's the weather been?" Firemen: "Are you a professional or a volunteer?" "Tell me about some of the big ones." Engineers: "What project are you involved in now?" "Project" is the key word here. This is the most effective question a layman can ask an engineer to get them talking. "How would (name of his speciality) impact on my daily life?" Money people: "Are you enthusiastic (depressed) about the current market outlook?"

Members of the clergy: For worship do you use? Cowboys: "Where have you cowboied most?" Computer nerds: "Do you have Windows?" Barman: "How's business?" Crossword-puzzle enthusiasts: "Which books do you work on?" If she says the Times, give a gasp of awe. Men's health giving advice on "How to talk to anyone"

Dodgy deity
THE FIRST winning entry was Theobrea, goddess of competitions, devised by Jennifer Howard of Bedford (who also gave Blacandeva, the god of household repairs and improvements; the Vimpil, gods of speed, presiding over road building and fast food; Tuisrus, the god of childhood, and Lastordus, the dreaded spirit of sobriety).

The second winning entry was Optrex, the all seeing king of the Gods, devised by Tony Barnes of Tynemouth (who also gave Mafia, the invisible god mother; Hypercoetus, the god of overcharging, particularly for central heating installation; Quota, the Germanic goddess of trawling fishing, introduced under the Treaty of Rome; Pax Romana; Ambiguous, the god of manifesto writing; and his consort Amnesia; and referendus, the

god of avoiding the issue. Other deities that deserve a mention were Pliobricus, the god of modern art; Comepetia, the goddess of the ever hopeful; Cuspid, the Roman tooth fairy, and Lilo, the god of fugitives. Suetonius, the god of puddings; Skoda and Leda, the goddesses of cheap chariots; Caricoccus, the goddesses of embarrassment; Dianisius, the god of royal lovers; Compitius, the god of archaeological dictionaries.

A book editor, who wished to remain anonymous, reported that Specius and Spurius, the twin gods of archaeological publishing, are still being worshipped. The results of the *Deive a Deity competition in the Current Archaeology* September issue. Thanks to Joseph Nicholas.

Jackdaw wants jewels. E-mail jackdaw@guardian.co.uk; fax 0171-713 4366; Jackdaw, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

Emily Sheffield

Broctunnel 'deal' shares

MARKET

total

assing

re for

which

esters

Cabinet is spl

sell air traf

Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239-9610
Fax: 0171-833-4456

Finance Guardian

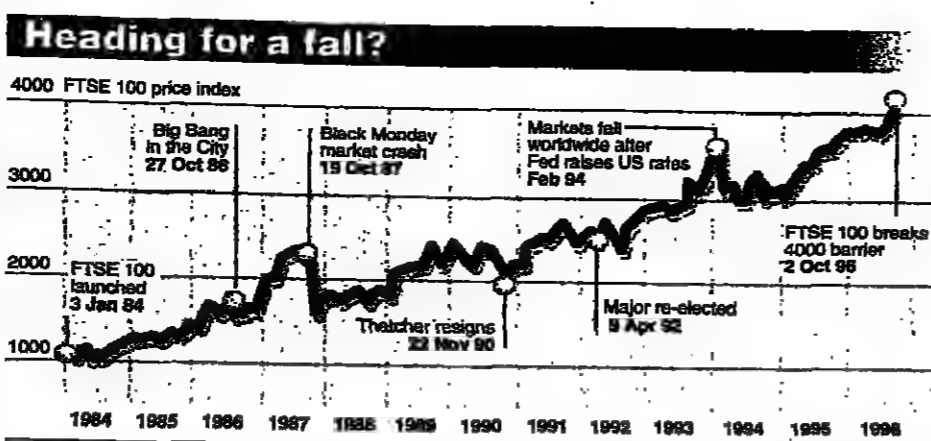
Shares break 4000 barrier

THE FTSE-100, the index of leading shares, smashed through the 4000 barrier for the first time yesterday, amid continued optimism on corporate results and the continued strength of the economy.

After breaking through 4000 in the first minute of trading, the Footsie finished 223 points up at 4,015.1, setting a new closing high for the second day running.

The new peak is the latest achieved by an increasingly confident stock market, which received a further boost last week when America's central bank, the Federal Reserve, unexpectedly decided not to raise interest rates.

Equity strategists said that apart from the Fed's decision last week, the strong performance was due to the increasing attraction of shares in comparison to gilts, and to the continued good news coming from the corporate sector.



While some analysts said they expected that the market could run as high as 4200 by the end of the year, others warned that share prices are now so high that a "correction" — the City's euphemism for crash — looks inevitable.

The Footsie, which is an index of shares in Britain's biggest 100 quoted companies, started life on January 3, 1984 at 1000. It broke through 2000 on March 4, 1987 — seven months before the infamous Black Monday crash of October that year — and reached 3000 on August 11, 1993.

This year, the index opened at 3689.3, but after rising until April on the back of takeover bids — such as Granada's £3.9 billion assault on Forte and Rentokil's £2.1 billion swoop on BET — slipped back to the year's low of 3632 on July 15.

Since then, despite an absence of further takeover activity, it has risen sharply, following increasing evidence that the economy is strengthening, consumer activity picking up, and because the continued low level of interest rates makes staying with cash an unattractive option for institutional investors.

But the peak could provide further embarrassment for FDFM, one of the City's largest pension fund managers,

Advisers' fees hit £1bn mark as M&A mania mushrooms

CITY advisers are set to rake in a record £1 billion-plus in fees this year as merger mania sweeps corporate Britain, writes Sarah Whitebloom.

According to figures released yesterday by Acquisitions Monthly magazine, 1996 is on course to exceed heady days of the 1980s takeover boom. The value of mergers is forecast to come in at £70 billion for the full year — compared to £45 billion in 1995.

Charging £200-plus an hour, these advisers are on course to break the £1 billion barrier. Most of the fees go to investment bankers, the underwriters and the lawyers involved in a takeover — although PRs, brokers and other bit players have done nicely too.

Notebook

Political driver for robust market



Edited by Alex Brummer

AFTER hovering just below the 4000 mark for almost a month, the FTSE has finally overcome its inhibitions and come robustly through the barrier. Given that the UK economy is on the verge of a further growth surge, following the pause earlier this year, there is some reality in the move — but the immediate risk is that the authorities will have to move interest rates up to prevent overheating as the economy moves towards full production.

Remarkably, two political factors are also fuelling the current rally. First, the sharp convergence of bond yields in continental Europe on the prospects for monetary union has driven UK government bonds higher and closed the gap between gilts and German bund yields. That has made equities more attractive via a vis gilts, a trend which could continue should the UK edge towards monetary union as Tony Blair hinted in his conference speech.

the field of health care insurance and developing direct (and more recently Internet) selling services, it has had to rely on new life policyholders as the main source of capital. A public quotation will enable it to expand both in traditional life and pensions services and into new products.

As a company seeking new cash in addition to rewarding life policyholders, the ultimate owners of the company, Norwich Union will have a tougher task ahead than some of the other mutuals — nearly all building societies — coming to the market. It will need to demonstrate that its life business is holding its own in a competitive market place and is cost effective. Almost every conversion or financial merger is accompanied by promises of few or no lost jobs: almost all least advantageous as the shelter of mutual ownership is shed and there is greater focus on profits and dividends.

We know that Norwich Union's general insurance company made profits of £11 million last year but the profitability of the life business will remain an unknown quantity until a full Stock Exchange prospectus is distributed next spring. The society's decision to change status is entirely understandable: but even a £4.7 billion quoted vehicle could be vulnerable to takeover unless it performs.

BULL MARKET

BULLS argue the market should continue rising for the rest of the year, helped by the continuing flood of money to institutions, further good news from companies and a possible surge in takeover activity ahead of the election.

Philip Wolstenholme, equity strategist at broker Merrill Lynch, says: "My guess is that it will be around 4200 this time next year. Once people have got the election behind them and interest rates have started rising, people may be less sanguine but, for the moment, rates are staying where they are and earnings coming through are quite strong."

... or BLOODBATH?

APART from POFM's Tony Dye, whose fears about a possible crash have led him to keep 15 per cent of his funds in cash, there are plenty of bears who argue that stocks are now looking expensive.

They say that, aside from a likely US interest rate rise, the last quarter of the year tends to be nervous, with the clearest of the election adding tension.

One equity strategist said: "The market looks over-stretched and I don't think the recent run can be sustained."

Windfall guessing game for Norwich investors

Richard Miles

THREE million Norwich Union policyholders are to receive free shares next year after the company said yesterday it is to become the first mutual insurer to seek a listing on the London stock market.

But policyholders must wait six months before they learn the size of their windfall because Norwich refuses to confirm estimates of £500 to £700.



Going public... after 200 years of mutualism in Surrey Street, Norwich. Below: how the Guardian broke the news in July

Norwich Union set to float

The largest chunk of shares will be distributed to 1.5 million with-profits policyholders — who are ultimately the mutual's owners — but customers with individual pensions, annuities, term assurance and unit-linked policies will also receive a windfall.

To qualify for a hand-out, policies must have been in force at midnight last Tuesday and remain so until the extraordinary general meeting is held next spring.

Cabinet is split on rush to sell air traffic control

Rebecca Smithers, Keith Harper and Simon Bewis

THE Treasury is fighting a campaign to rush through the privatisation of the air traffic control service in the face of growing objections from senior ministers in other departments.

The Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, and Treasury colleagues had hoped to win cabinet approval for the sale, which could raise between £600 million and £1 billion ahead of the election, in time for it to be unveiled at next week's Conservative Party conference.

But their plans to push through a sale or a franchise deal without new legislation have run into fierce resistance from both the Department of Transport and the Ministry of Defence, which fear that a sell-off could raise safety doubts.

Whitehall sources suggest that the issue is soon to be fought out in a cabinet sub-

committee, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine, who has previously supported the idea.

The jewel in the sale of National Air Traffic Services (Nats) is the new state-of-the-art £350 million control centre at Swanwick in Hampshire.

Dogged by technical problems, it is due to come on stream at the end of next year, nearly 12 months late. When it is up and running it will eventually increase air space capacity over Britain to at least double what it is today by 2015.

The first casualty of any sell-off would be plans to build a second centre at Prestwick, near Glasgow, for £230 million.

The Civil Aviation Authority, which controls privatisation, now strongly favours Britain abandon its policy of having two centres providing safety back-up to each other.

Swanwick's technical difficulties will have to be ironed out before the CAA dares to

proceed with the single centre plan.

Sir George Young, the Transport Secretary, is under considerable pressure to give his assent to the sale. But he is warning that it could compromise Britain's excellent safety record. He also believes that there is insufficient parliamentary time before the election to squeeze it in.

The MoD, spurred on by the Royal Air Force, is said to support his claim that a hurried sale would be unwise given continuing technical snags at Swanwick.

Yesterday, the shadow transport secretary, Andrew Smith, gave the Government its strongest warning yet that Labour would block the privatisation, winning him the biggest round of applause of his speech at Labour's party conference.

Condemning it as the Tories' latest "crazy" privatisation scheme, he said: "Let me warn the Transport Secretary. Labour will do everything we can to block this sell-off. Our air is not for sale."

News in brief

Mining company revises profits

Butte Mining, embroiled in legal action for years to retrieve profits made by the previous owners of its Montana mines, has been forced to restate its accounts for the year to June 1996.

The Financial Reporting Review Panel, has required the company to issue new accounts which will show a loss of £628,000 rather than the original profit of £339,000, because profit on shares received by Butte but not sold at the balance sheet date should not have been included.

HTV seeks payment cut

Welsh television company HTV, which announced a 10 per cent interim profits rise to £5.7 million, has opened negotiations on reducing the £23 million a year it pays to the Treasury for its licence. It admitted, however, that it could become a target for takeover before licence renewals.

BA report sent to Lang

The long delayed report by the Office of Fair Trading into the proposed alliance between

British Airways and American Airlines was sent to the Trade and Industry Secretary, Ian Lang, yesterday. Industry sources suggested he would make up his mind on whether to refer it to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission next week, but might delay an announcement until after the Conservative party conference.

Change 2 name

MERCURY One 2 One, the smallest of the British mobile phone operators, changed its name to just One 2 One, as part of a £10 million marketing campaign. The company is adding a free message service to its more recent tariff packages.

Bid for oil company

Cairn Energy, which is developing a gas field in Bangladesh, yesterday made an agreed AS\$75 million (£30 million) bid for Australia's Command Petroleum, which has an oil field in the Bay of Bengal. Cairn shares jumped by 7 per cent to an all-time high of 397p.

Bank's record leap

A surge in lending over the last six months helped the Bank of Scotland to a 24 per

cent leap in interim profits. At the pre-tax level, the bank turned in a record £24.3 million. The underlying loan portfolio was up 14 per cent year on year — with mortgages and lending to manufacturers and service businesses particularly significant.

Small firms' big costs

Legal burdens on owner-managed businesses have increased despite government attempts to cut red tape, according to research by Manchester Business School for the Forum of Private Business. A business with 15 employees and a turnover of £1 million could have £20,000-a-year extra on employment costs to comply with tax, employment and health and safety regulations, the report says.

Great exhibition

Blenheim, the conference and exhibition organiser, said its first half pre-tax profits had more than doubled from £15.2 million to £30.7 million. But the company insisted that an announcement on rumours that it is soon to announce an agreed bid from Reed Elsevier, would be made "when appropriate". The shares closed 4p lower at 412p.

Mutual pressure

WITH so many financial groups converting from mutual to plc status next spring, the decision by the Norwich Union to seek a quotation may seem routine. But it is far from that. The Norwich Union has unique reasons for wanting to change its status. Among the large mutual life companies it is the only one who's investment portfolio has within it a general insurance company and overseas subsidiaries — the former of which is particularly vulnerable to the insurance cycle. By going public and at the same time raising fresh capital, the life fund will be able to buy out the general insurance company and reinvest the proceeds in a more traditional portfolio.

In the Norwich Union case, mutual status has also restricted the society's access to capital. As the company has grown in recent years, becoming an important force in

Mini exodus

THERE were many brave pledges made by the German car company BMW when it bought Rover from British Aerospace three years ago. This week's decision to go to South America for engines for the new mini puts those promises into a more realistic perspective.

Most immediately, the decision shows how determined BMW is to boost profits at Rover. Profit margins are notoriously thin on small cars. The £600,000 joint venture engine plant with Chrysler will also cost. It has the added virtue of applying pressure on the Government to concede hefty grants for the engine plant that Rover once built in the Midlands.

But the decision is a serious setback for British engineering. The engine in what was one of the most successful cars ever made will no longer be developed, or built in the UK. Rover's control over its own destiny has clearly been weakened. And BMW's readiness to go far afield to solve Rover's problems has been signalled.

But the South American solution also highlights the reality of the global marketplace. The Government talks much of inward investment and the UK's success in attracting it. But there are threats too from these ebb and flows of money and orders. The mini will be powered by an American-designed engine built in a South American factory commissioned by a German company. Ford and General Motors are globalising their operations. The chances are that more development and more manufacturing could go overseas. And politicians can do precious little about it.

Gates pays up to keep staff

Mark Tran in New York

THE value of stock options at software giant Microsoft has leapt by 30 per cent to \$570 million (£360 million) in the past year.

It brings the total value of options granted over the past three years to \$1.34 billion. The rise will help Bill Gates' company to retain key staff, who had begun drifting away to Silicon Valley rivals promising the more immediate rewards of sky-high salaries.

The large increase reflects the sharp rise since the beginning of the year in Microsoft's share price boosted by impressive growth by the systems software group behind the Windows 95 and Windows NT platforms.

The value of the options for the year ending June 30 is more than a quarter of the company's earnings for the same period.

Mr Gates himself is profiting from the company's growth. Earlier this week Forbes magazine crowned him the richest man in America, with a net worth of \$12.6 billion.

The new employee stock option figures were listed in Microsoft's Securities and Exchange Commission filing under the section "Outlook: Issues and Uncertainties". Jerry Masters, director of financial reporting at Microsoft, said: "The real reason we did this is to show there is a long-term risk that our use of stock options could be replaced with cash."

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

| | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Australia 1.9000 | France 7.82 | Italy 2.334 | Singapore 2.1525 |
| Austria 16.28 | Germany 2.150 | Malta 0.5490 | South Africa 6.58 |
| Belgium 47.6 | Greece 356.33 | Netherlands 2.50 | Spain 194.75 |
| Canada 2.0775 | Hong Kong 11.79 | New Zealand 2.1725 | Sweden 10.18 |
| Cyprus 0.7070 | India 55.77 | Norway 9.9125 | Switzerland 1.8650 |
| Denmark 8.2520 | Ireland 0.9480 | Portugal 236.50 | Turkey 138.489 |
| Finland 7.0775 | Israel 4.98 | Saudi Arabia 5.8350 | USA 1.5250 |

Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli shekel).

Announcement rushed out to avert legal action

Eurotunnel claims debt deal agreed

Patrick Donovan
City Editor

EUROTUNNEL yesterday announced it had agreed terms for rescheduling its \$3 billion debt with supporting banks, though it has yet to finalise details on the negotiations which have lasted almost a year.

The announcement appears to have been rushed out in an attempt to avert the company's being put into administration under French law and to quash speculation that both sides were unable to come up with a deal.

The company's statement that terms had been "agreed in principle" was met with widespread scepticism in the market since Eurotunnel is still finalising the long-awaited details of the restructuring package which could see up to 49 per cent of the debt wiped out by the banks in return for new equity.

Eurotunnel insisted that the deal was imminent, however, and that trading in its shares could resume next Tuesday. Shares were suspended at 115p in London and Paris at the beginning of the week to prevent the risks of a disorderly market because of uncertainty surrounding the company.

Speculation about the company's future has been rife because this was the deadline by which Eurotunnel had been expected to complete a deal. The agreement faces the final hurdle of a Friday conference of all the major banks. At this meeting the four "agents" or lead banks will present details to the group of introductory banks which speak for the rest of the 220-strong lending consortium.

Sources believe it is far from certain that consensus has been reached on all outstanding details because of the number of different vested interests of the supporting banks. It also needs the support of its shareholders — 70 per cent of the company is controlled by small investors, an unusually high proportion for any major stock market listed company.

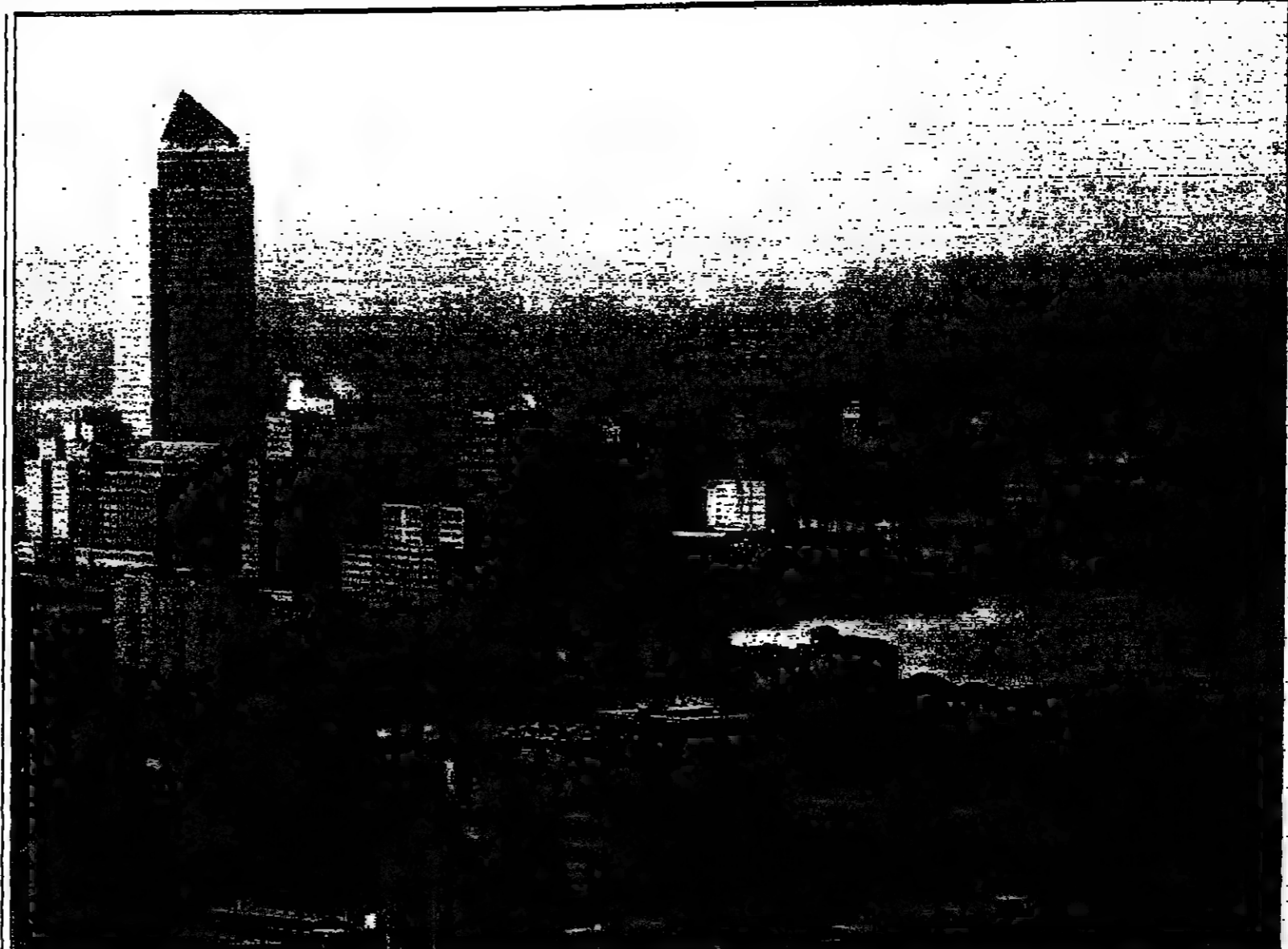
Besides the conversion of part of the debt into equity there is also expected to be an issue of convertible bonds. Other elements are thought to include share warrants, variable rate bonds and measures such as "stabilisation notes" which repay debt from a percentage of cash flow.

In a statement Eurotunnel said: "Agreement has been reached on the basic principles of the restructuring plan which is essential for the group's financial recovery."

But beneath the surface, it became clear that there are tensions between the company and the president of the Paris Commercial Court, which had appointed arbitrators to help broker a deal. The mandate of Lord Wakeham and his French counterpart, Robert Badinter, to referee the talks expired on Monday. It is not being renewed.

The president of the court, Jean-Pierre Mattei, yesterday insisted that he took the initiative to persuade a reluctant Eurotunnel to accept the mediation process that led to the breakthrough in the debt talks. He said his move was motivated by considerations of "fairness" to shareholders. He added: "The scale of Eurotunnel is such that a failure with its £70 billion of debt, and an international treaty and two courts involved, would have meant a legal and financial imbroglio without precedent."

Sources close to the agent banks however were last night playing down the court's role in the agreement, insisting they had freely accepted the constraints of the arbitration process. "It is nonsense to suggest that we were dragging our feet or doing anything to jeopardise shareholders' interests," one banking source said last night.



The new City... The growth of Canary Wharf and the Isle of Dogs has been necessary to accommodate the inflow of foreign institutions PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SILVER

Old favourites cast aside

IAN KING surveys the dramatic fall of Britain's independent financial institutions as foreign firms step in

LIKE the original event that created the universe, the City's own Big Bang has been followed by a series of volcanic eruptions and, 10 years on, the face of the City has been completely changed.

London has firmly established itself alongside New York and Tokyo as one of the world's leading financial centres, but as foreign institutions have come to town they have snuffed up most of Britain's most famous old banking names.

The way was paved for the invasion when it was agreed that membership of the Exchange should be thrown open to foreign companies, as New York had done with its own 'May Day' in 1975, and with the momentous decision to remove restrictions on overseas financial institutions owning British ones.

But unlike in the States, where, under the Glass-Steagall Act, banks were forbidden from becoming securities

houses, there were no such restrictions in Britain. Accordingly, a free-for-all ensued with banks falling over themselves to establish all-singing all-dancing one-stop finance shops.

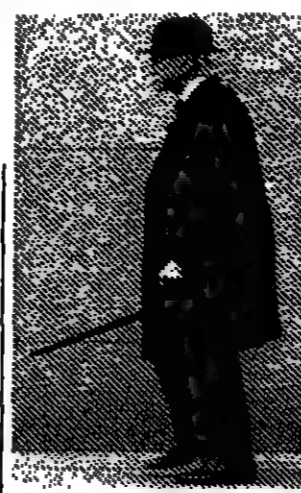
In particularly heavy demand were the old broking and jobbing houses.

London's revolutionary decision to make such changes, along with the increasing international movement of money, explains why the City has become so important on the world stage.

The Americans poured in and a presence in the Square Mile came to be seen as essential.

Up to half the trade in large French and Italian shares is now done in London, while the Square Mile is thought to account for around 80 per cent of all cross-border share deals.

But, one by one, over the past decade the grand old names of the City have vanished, swallowed by the foreigners trying to establish a



BIG BANG
10 years on

of Switzerland, which had bought it in 1985, decided to do away with the name. Others which vanished in the period either immediately before Big Bang or afterwards include Wood Mackenzie, which was bought by NatWest, Grieseson Grant, which was bought by Kleinwort, and Laing & Crutchbank, now owned by French bank Credit Lyonnais.

One of the most notable demises concerned two of London's most famous old stock-broking houses, Scrimgeour Kemp Gee and Vickers de Costa, which were gobbled up by American banking giant Citicorp.

Transmogrified into Citicorp Scrimgeour Vickers, and based in gleaming new headquarters just south of the Thames, the new firm was quickly rattled by the defections of key staff, lost confidence and clients alike, and was eventually closed in January 1996.

The final chapter in this sorry saga came in March 1995. For many in the City, the takeover of Barings — all but wiped out by Nick Leeson's reckless financial gambles — by Dutch group ING showed how far things had gone, but more was to follow.

Within weeks, SG Warburg, another aristocratic house, was humiliated in its failure to stitch a deal with American bank Morgan Stanley, and instead fell into the arms of Swiss Banking Corporation. Other foreign predators pounced and, when the dust settled, Kleinwort Benson was in the hands of Dresdner Bank, while Merrill Lynch, the so-called "thundering herd", had swallowed Smith New Court.

Some pointed to the fact that the old-style British merchant banks had always wanted to be players on a global stage and that, under their new owners, they stood a chance of achieving just that. But others, more sceptical, could only wonder whether the foreigners would still regard such "prizes" so enthusiastically once 1995's merger and takeover binge was over.

Big Bang helped entrench the City as a global force in finance.

But as the threat of a single currency looms, and as rival European markets become more adept, there is no room for the complacency that, over the past decade, has cost so many British financial institutions their independence.

Retailers back code for third-world suppliers

Roger Cowe

SAINSBURY and the Co-op signalled the start of a new era in high-street retailing yesterday when they launched a project to transform their trading relationships with third-world producers.

The two grocery groups have teamed up with the Fairtrade Foundation to develop codes of conduct which should result in improved conditions for workers making their own-label products.

The six-month pilot project includes purchases of flowers from Kenya, tea from India and electrical goods from China. Sainsbury aims to get commitments to a code of practice from all its developing country suppliers by March 1998.

The move follows growing interest in ethical issues such as animal welfare and pollution, which have led shoppers to question the source of products and the conditions under which they have been produced. And it reflects a growing belief that consumer and pressure group action

should be aimed at solutions to improve conditions.

Wendy Wrigley, head of brand and corporate marketing for the CVS, said the initiative was a "responsible retailing" initiative two years ago.

"As a consumer-owned organisation, our agenda is driven by consumer concerns, not by the City," she said. "This is about a basic set of standards which customers can expect from us as a retailer. It is about ordinary products on the shelves, not niche items."

Sainsbury's Petra Fridt said the chain's interest also came from shoppers' concerns.

The supermarkets will develop codes based on a third-world suppliers' charter launched yesterday by The Fairtrade Foundation, which is backed by charities such as Oxfam and Christian Aid. The charter incorporates minimum standards laid down by the International Labour Organisation, covering areas such as child labour and working conditions.

The pilot projects will also work out methods of monitoring conditions on the ground. Phil Wells, the foundation director, urged UK buyers to take responsibility for improving conditions rather than walking away from difficulties.

The charter

- Responsibility for suppliers' working conditions
- Commitment to decent conditions
- Widely accepted standards
- Monitoring by or on behalf of the UK buyer
- A continuing trading relationship
- Conditions to be a key factor in selecting suppliers
- Sub-contractors to be included
- Standards to develop with changing conditions
- Involvement of workers
- Independent auditing

FINANCIAL NEWS FROM BANK OF SCOTLAND

Bank of Scotland Interim Results

| | 6 months ended 31 August 1996 (unaudited) | 6 months ended 31 August 1995 (audited) | Year ended 29 February 1996 |
|--|---|---|-----------------------------|
| TOTAL PROFIT FROM GROUP OPERATIONS BEFORE PROVISIONS | £408.2m | £339.6m | £706.4m |
| PROFIT BEFORE TAXATION | £324.3m | £261.6m | £545.0m |
| TOTAL CAPITAL RESOURCES | £3,688m | £3,105m | £3,533m |
| TOTAL ASSETS | £46,140m | £36,837m | £44,099m |
| EARNINGS PER ORDINARY STOCK UNIT | 15.0p | 12.6p | 25.8p |
| DIVIDEND PER ORDINARY STOCK UNIT | 2.91p | 2.45p | 6.85p |

Pre-tax profit £324.3 million — up 24 per cent

Pre-tax return on average equity (annualised) 36.7 per cent

Dividend increased by 18.9 per cent

Cost-income ratio 52.9 per cent

BANK OF SCOTLAND
A FRIEND FOR LIFE

For a copy of the Bank's Interim Report please contact: PR&C Relations Department, Bank of Scotland, The Account, Edinburgh EH4 7YD.

Underside

Dan Atkinson

LORD Eastwell, one-time economic guru to Neil Kinnock now transplanted to the House of Peers, confided to comrades at Labour's up-country rally this week that he is already turning his mind to the finances of his *alma mater*, Queen's, Cambridge, of which he becomes Master in January. Plan A is to touch fellow alumnus the Sultan of Abu Dhabi (he who took a billion-dollar bath over BCCI) for about £30 million. The Baron reckons the Sultan owes him one; when they were up together, the former wrote some of the latter's essays for him. Let's hope they were of a higher standard than Lord Eastwell's single-currency crazed economic thinking, which, you may recall, helped lose Labour the last election.

MAYBE it's the combination of English reserve and old-time Dutch religion, but Unilever went over all coy about its exciting new product launch this week. From the initial communiqué, it wasn't easy to tell what it was, with its burble about "leading-edge technology" and mumbled references to sister-products, pregnancy test Clearblue and ovulation test Clearplan. On the day it emerged the bashful boffins had produced a new chemical-free

contraceptive. Unilever, when asked questions in this department, should stick to the answer given by the dad whose little liddle asked what was vendid by those machines in pub lavatories. "Things for stopping headaches," was the firm (and truthful) response.

FEW of the fund managers treated to a recent Channel Tunnel visit will have been exactly shocked by the suspension of Eurotunnel's shares. The event, we hear, was less Trans-Europe Express and more Slow Train Coming. On arrival at the "black-hole of Kent", the party learned no refreshments were available because the kitchens had neither running water nor electricity. The demonstration of Eurotunnel's state-of-the-art X-ray machine — it can scan an entire carriage — was not a success either. Viewing was cancelled after a two-hour emergency



caused by a train breakdown in the tunnel. In a fitting end to the day's delights, the money-men were shepherded on to a convoy of mini-buses and driven to a local restaurant to meet Eurotunnel's operations director. Unfortunately, or perhaps not, the ops supreme had made his way to a different restaurant.

"At least it wasn't on the other side of the Channel," said one visitor.

PROOF, if proof were needed (it isn't) that the property mini-rocket has already surged into the Heavies Layer of

nonsensical delusion comes with a communication from Metropolitan Developments. A roaring trade is reported in — wait for it — Docklands warehouse apartments, and Metropolitan has just sold more than half its 46-flat development at the eerily-named Canada Wharf (it sounds like something dreamed up by a screenwriter doing a number on the late Eighties) in less than a week.

Managing director Howard Crocker chorales: "Once people see Canada Wharf they will realise there is no other development like it in the Dock-

lands or anywhere in London."

Don't ever change.

FINALLY, an informal meeting of G7 finance ministers in Dublin recently saw the assembled suits take time off to see the sights, including the famous Book of Kells at Trinity College. A guide explained that the book supposedly possesses magic qualities; if dipped in water, any sick animals drinking from the pool will be cured. Irish finance minister Ruairi Quinn asked: "Can we borrow it for a couple of weeks?"

easyJet

Amsterdam

Smart Class not Club Class

£35

easyJet

0990 29 29 29

The follicly challenged and wig wearers amongst us, who think it's unfair to be charged the price of a full haircut, can now pay for their haircuts by the minute.

SEE BACK PAGE

Hurricane to land...

market card with...

Soccer

Martin Thorpe on a rule change regarding postponements for international call-ups that could keep League clubs in action well into June

Fixture log-jam could extend season

THE Football League season could well be extended into June to cope with a log-jam of rearranged fixtures caused by a rule change ushered through yesterday...

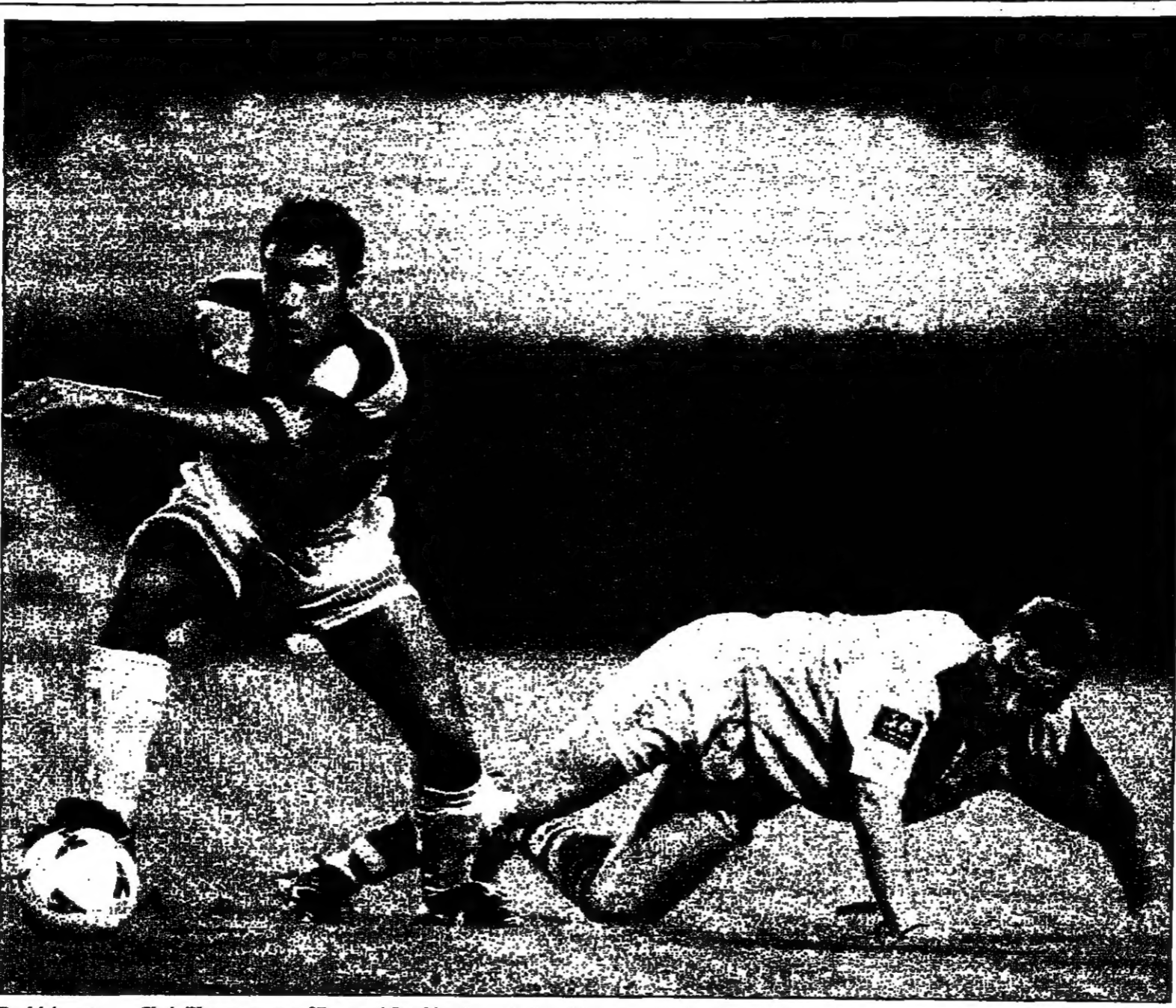
having a game to show live on Sunday because the game between Crystal Palace and Sheffield United is in doubt. Yesterday's rule change allows clubs with Under-21 players called up for national service to count them in the three absentees needed to ask for, and get, a postponement.

On Tuesday Palace gave a written assurance that, despite the anticipated introduction of the new rule, they would play the game. But it is understood, Basset has changed his mind. Now the Football League has told Palace to stick to their word.

called off because more players had been called up; Tony Scully to the Republic's Under-21 squad, Daniel Boshall on stand-by for the England Under-21s and Dougie Freedman poised for promotion from stand-by into the full Scotland squad.

First Division: Wolves 1, Bolton 2 McGinlay double sends Bolton to top of table

GOAL four minutes from time by John McGinlay, his second of the match, sent Bolton two points clear at the top of the table last night after Wolves had some ahead in the first half through Darren Ferguson...



Rookie's move... Chris Plummer, one of Rangers' Combination-winning side last season but denied a full debut, strolls past Vale's Walker

Ravanelli 'happy to stay at Boro'

FABRIZIO RAVANELLI yesterday scotched rumours of his impending departure from Middlesbrough and said: "I will be happy to sign for another two years if they want to keep me."

Queens Park Rangers 1, Port Vale 2 Guppy leaves Rangers floundering

THE honeymoon is over already, Stewart Houston heard his first boss at Loftus Road last night as an abject display by his new side ended in defeat by Port Vale in front of the lowest home crowd in four seasons.

Results

Table listing football results for various leagues including National League, First Division, and Scottish League Cup.

Sport in brief

A weakened Pakistan side beat Kenya by four wickets in the Kenyan century tournament in Nairobi yesterday.

McGrath can go and as soon as possible, say Aston Villa

PAUL MCGRATH has been put on the transfer list at Villa's £200,000 asking price. "We have informed all clubs in this country and in Scotland that Paul is available," Little confirmed last night.

Uefa warning on Dons' move

UEFA yesterday stressed its opposition to Wimbledon's proposed relocation to Dublin and said it would not sanction a move that was "against the spirit of the game".

Cricket

A weakened Pakistan side beat Kenya by four wickets in the Kenyan century tournament in Nairobi yesterday.

Ice Hockey

Superleague Nottingham 1, Sheffield 4. Premier League: Southampton 2, Middlesbrough 2.

Large advertisement on the right side of the page for 'Breakaway Clubs' and 'Widney Harbour'.

Rugby Union

Breakaway clubs now look to Sky

David Plummer on the Five Nations delegations gathering in London

THE leading clubs in the four home countries will tomorrow find out if BSkyB is prepared to fund a breakaway movement. Representatives of the clubs together with a delegation from France are to meet in London and expect to be offered a contract which could be worth £25 million a year.

Though Sky's chief executive Sam Chisholm has told the home unions that he will not fund a breakaway and is more likely to withdraw from the Cup, the clubs insist that Sky is prepared to back a European Cup and an Anglo-Welsh tournament as well as the English league.

All 12 Welsh First Division clubs met with their union this week and were offered £2.6 million this season. The clubs would bank £200,000 each with £1.2 million being given to First Division Ltd to share on a merit basis.

The Welsh National League is not sponsored this season and there is a backer for the Anglo-Welsh Cup, a competition which seemed a good idea two months ago, which has been a victim of congested fixture schedules.

FDL was also promised a greater say in the running of competitions in which it is involved, though the Welsh Rugby Union would retain the ultimate control.

The WRU's plan is that the next season's Anglo-Welsh Cup and the European Cup would be played on Saturdays with the Welsh league

matches being played on a home or away basis which would cut the fixtures by half. They accept that the value of their own club tournament is low because Sky is not interested in televising it.

The 12 are keeping an open mind but some are sceptical. "We have heard promises for months," said one club official. "The time has now come for Sky to put up or shut up because we need the money desperately. We have been told there will be a signed contract from Sky ready for us in London, but seeing is believing."

The WRU's offer is on the table and, though it falls short of the £500,000 each we were asking for, it is a start. The union has also shifted its ground on the issue of control and proposes to set up a business committee on which it would have a majority of one. It remains to be seen whether that could be sold to the whole of the WRU's membership but even then it is less than what we want."

England's leading 24 clubs have served notice on the Rugby Football Union that they will go their own way a week tomorrow, but clubs without wealthy benefactors will have to win the approval of their members. All of Wales's First Division clubs would need the consent of their members, too, even though five of them have made moves to become limited companies.

French clubs have stayed out of the dispute because of the support they receive from local government, backing which would be jeopardised if they took part in competitions not sanctioned by the French federation. However, officials have agreed to come to London and maintain a watching brief.

Gloucester look to buy way out of trouble

Hill puts survival above principles

GLOUCESTER'S director of coaching Richard Hill is to abandon his principles in an attempt to stave off the threat of relegation from Courage League One.

Hill had put his faith in a crop of promising young players recruited at little or no cost but, with Gloucester second from bottom, having lost all five of their matches, he has decided to try to spend his way out of trouble.

"If money is available, despite the fact that it is against my principles, I will seriously have a look at bringing in a couple of players," said the former England scrum-half. "Principles have to go out of the window when Gloucester's future is at stake. It will have to be the right person, though. I want a player who will not only offer some cutting edge in attack but will contribute in training as well."

It is the second time this season that Hill has had to climb down after a policy failure. His strategy of targeting weaker sides against stronger opposition and his first-choice XV when Gloucester played teams he expected to beat, was quickly ditched after a heavy defeat by Harlequins in their opening match.

Players at all levels of the game in England will now face the yellow peril, with the cards flourished by referees in the national leagues last

season coming into general usage. However, players will not face the threat of automatic suspension for receiving two yellow cards because the accumulative procedure that was used last season has been dropped.

But a player who has been sent off will have previous yellow cards taken into account at his disciplinary hearing and the Rugby Football Union's special disciplinary committee has recommended an extra week's ban for each previous yellow card.

Henry Hurley's debut for Moseley has been further delayed. The Ireland international prop was to have made his bow in the League Two game against Richmond at The Reddings on Saturday but has had to withdraw for personal reasons.

The Anglo-Welsh Cup match between Leicester and Bridgend which was postponed last month will be played next Tuesday at Welford Road.

Louis Luyt, the president of the South African Rugby Football Union, met the Natal wing James Small in Johannesburg yesterday in a move designed to smooth the player's path back into the Springbok team. Small was dropped after the Tri-Nations match against New Zealand in Cape Town on August 10 because he had been seen in a nightclub in the early hours of the morning two days before the game.



Holding operation... the Lions centre Keith Senior is stopped in his tracks by one of the President's men in Fiji

PHOTOGRAPH: VICTORIA MATTHEWS

Tour match: Fijian President's XIII 16, Great Britain 42

Hammond leads the try feast

Andy Wilson in Laszoka

GREAT BRITAIN put on their least impressive performance of the tour yesterday but, for Karlie Hammond and Neil Harmon, both surprise selections for the party, it was a highly satisfactory evening under the Churchill Park floodlights.

Hammond, a late replacement for the injured Shaun Edwards, reverted from loose forward, a position he adopted with some success for St Helens in Super League last season, to scoring off a try in the Lions' eighth in two.

Harmon's contribution was

less spectacular but he was praised by the coach Phil Larder for a solid 70-minute effort in what was his first significant appearance for more than three months.

Apart from a few minutes in the first game of the tour, in Papua New Guinea last week when he was knocked out making his first tackle, he had not played since the expiry of his contract with Leeds at the end of June. "I asked Phil to let me stay on as long as possible because I need to build up my match fitness," said the 27-year-old prop who is still looking for a club. "The Tests in New Zealand are my goal."

Harmon celebrated in unusual fashion by pulling on a miniskirt for a night on the town. The squad has been

split into four groups of eight and Harmon's team, led by Denis Betts, has taken to wearing grass skirts in the Fiji tradition. "The rest of the lads have got long skirts but they just don't do a thing for me," he said.

Against disappointing opponents the tourists led 26-0 at half-time with Hammond setting up tries for Joey Hayes with a well-weighted kick to the corner and, more fortunately, Keith Senior with a rare, misdirected pass that the Sheffield centre did well to gather.

Further close-range scores came from Tulse Tollett and Nick Cassidy but the Lions looked disjointed at times and squandered a number of chances. The Fijians scored easily their best try in the

third quarter, through the substitute Korol, after a superbly delayed pass from the full-back Eprame Navale, formerly of Sydney St George and one of only three team members with first-class league experience.

Hammond completed his hat-trick with two of three Lions tries between the 63rd and 73rd minutes, set up by Mather and Morley respectively and either side of one from Critchley, to establish a 43-8 lead. The Fijians then gave an enthusiastic crowd something to cheer with spectacular scores by Baraviala and Navale.

Larder praised the defensive organisation of the opposition. "They compared favourably with the sides we played in PNG when you con-

sider they are a few years behind in terms of development, but they played as though the flair had been coached out of them," he said.

"When they started off-loading later on they caused more problems."

Fiji's Test team, who looked on from the main stand, will be more entertaining and threatening as most of their players have top-level experience. Moreover, since their mixed showing in the Centenary World Cup they have ditched the Australian coach Graham Murray for a local man.

Fijian President's XIII Navale: Baraviala, Dau Katuriala, Velubua, Totalea, Maravatu, Lomaloma, Nofele, Baraviala, Soga, Rawavavua, Lupu, Substitutes: Ovalase, Korol, Bismakidava, Sika. Great Britain: Prescott, Hayes, Mather, Senior, Critchley, Hammond, Tollett, Harmon, Lovers, O'Connor, Bradbury, Cassidy, Jovni, Substitutes: Sullivan, Molloy, Morley, Dwyer.

Rugby League

S Wales pull out in reply to snub

SOUTH WALES, denied a place in Super League by fellow clubs who felt they were not up to the challenge, have turned down the offer of a First Division berth next year and withdrawn from the Rugby Football League altogether.

The Cardiff-based club, who played in the Second Division this summer, told the RFL that it was "Super League or bust".

The RFL's chief executive Maurice Lindsay said after the decision was conveyed to a council meeting in Leeds: "South Wales felt that Division One would be a halfway house and that people there want to watch the best or nothing. I am disappointed because I was a big fan, but they still have plans to apply for Super League for 1998 or beyond."

"They want to spend the time developing rugby league in their area, working with the development officer, on the lines of Auckland Warriors, who took 18 months to put a side together for the Winfield Cup."

Mike Nicholas, the former Welsh international behind the formation of South Wales, said: "The only way to make it work is to have the profile of Super League."

"It is not viable for us to play in the First Division. We were ready for Super League and we were given it, only for it to be taken away from us."

"We are prepared to wait. We don't mind keeping the game going as long as at some stage they put us straight into Super League."

The loss of South Wales means that 11 clubs will operate in the First and Second Divisions with an extended season running from March 1 to October 5 to take in a new play-off competition.

An attempt by those clubs to form a separate marketing company along the lines of Super League's Rugby League (Europe) Limited has been put down quickly by the RFL's board of directors.

Cricket

Gating to fill in for Gooch

David Hoppa

GRAHAM GOOCH has withdrawn as coach of the England A party to Australia because of the ill health of his father Alf. His place goes to another former England captain Mike Gating.

Alf, a familiar figure on Essex grounds throughout his son's career, was taken ill during the county's final championship game of the season and Gooch was forced to retire against Gloucestershire, on 170 not out, to visit him in hospital.

Gating had always been held in high regard by the former chairman of selectors Raymond Illingworth and clearly, even after the latter's retirement, his stock remains high. He will join David Gray, the tour manager, when the party leaves in three weeks' time.

Essex's Sarah Marshall, 14, on her Wembley debut took the Squibb & Davies Junior Foxhunter Championship on Miami Blaze with the fastest of three faultless rounds in a seven-horse barrage.

Equestrianism

Cassan stands first and third

John Kerr at Wembley

TINA CASSAN, missing from the international scene for the past two seasons, achieved a rare result when finishing first and third in the SGC Scaffolding National Grade C Championship at the Horse of the Year show's opening session here yesterday.

Only three among 23 reached a jump-off for the first of the week's National Senior contests. Cassan, 30 and the Queen's Cup winner in 1992 and 1993, produced a brisk clear on Spartix and this proved the winning round. Mark Armstrong was also faultless on Iwan, a little less than a second slower. Cassan returned on Finchpalm Fujiyama and was again clear to add third to her first.

Essex's Sarah Marshall, 14, on her Wembley debut took the Squibb & Davies Junior Foxhunter Championship on Miami Blaze with the fastest of three faultless rounds in a seven-horse barrage.

Golf

Master of House waits on Monty

Michael Britton in Berlin

GERMANS have a way with words, and not for nothing is their national hero Bernhard Langer known as *Der Hausherr*, or Master of the House. Two victories and four second places in the tournament he founded to commemorate his 1986 triumph at Augusta, coupled with seven other European Tour wins in his own country, have earned him the accolade.

But Langer has recently fallen on hard times on the greens, and in his embarrassment has resorted to a broom-handle putter. So, when the German Masters begins at the Motzener See club some 20 miles south of the German capital, he will be playing an unaccustomed secondary role in the contest between *Der Daserbrenner*, alias Colin Montgomerie, and *Der Rückkehrer*, alias Ian Woosnam.

The year-long duel between the Scot and the Welshman has reached its climax with Montgomerie within a few birdies of clinching a fourth successive European title to equal the record set by Peter Oosterhuis (1971-74). Should Montgomerie win £5,653 more than Woosnam from this week's prize fund of £850,000 he would have an unassailable lead in the money list, even if his closest challenger secures a fifth 1996 victory in this month's Volvo Masters where the first prize is £150,000. Montgomerie's lead is £143,348 and Woosnam looks to be going the same way as Nick Faldo, Seve Ballesteros and Sam Torrance, who have all failed to topple the Scot. That is why Monty is billed here as "the one who never stops".

Woosnam won the season's first two tournaments in Singapore and Perth, but was under pressure after Montgomerie emerged from a three-month winter fitness drive to win his first event in Dubai.

"That was the most important of my 12 European wins," said the Scot yesterday. "That set the pattern. I hit two driver shots to 30 feet for a birdie at my first hole and I was off and running again." Woosnam needs the £106,330 first prize to keep the

equal the record set by Peter Oosterhuis (1971-74). Should Montgomerie win £5,653 more than Woosnam from this week's prize fund of £850,000 he would have an unassailable lead in the money list, even if his closest challenger secures a fifth 1996 victory in this month's Volvo Masters where the first prize is £150,000. Montgomerie's lead is £143,348 and Woosnam looks to be going the same way as Nick Faldo, Seve Ballesteros and Sam Torrance, who have all failed to topple the Scot. That is why Monty is billed here as "the one who never stops".

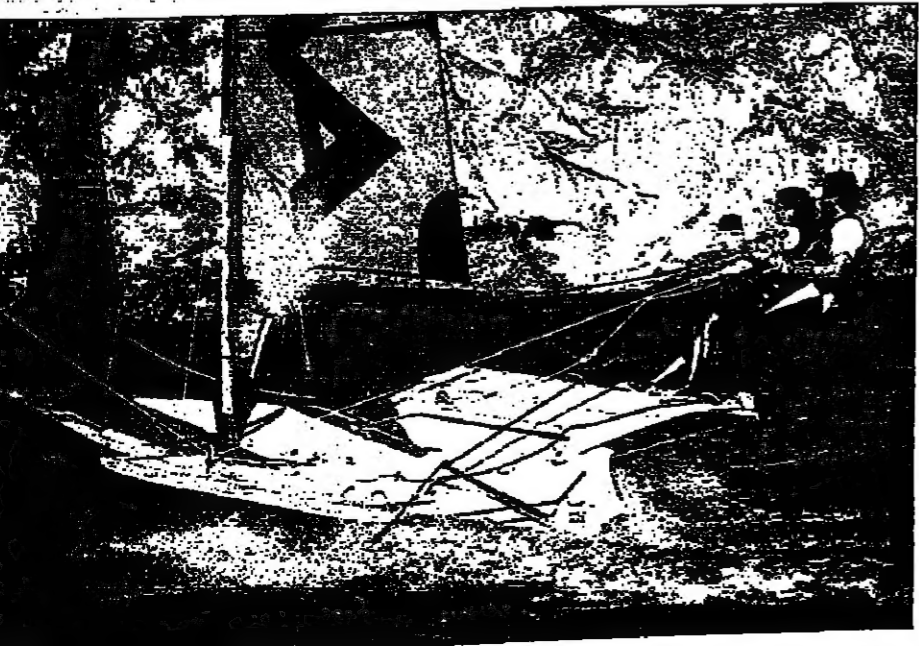
Woosnam won the season's first two tournaments in Singapore and Perth, but was under pressure after Montgomerie emerged from a three-month winter fitness drive to win his first event in Dubai.

"That was the most important of my 12 European wins," said the Scot yesterday. "That set the pattern. I hit two driver shots to 30 feet for a birdie at my first hole and I was off and running again." Woosnam needs the £106,330 first prize to keep the

Lehman, the South African Ernie Els, warming up for a possible third successive World Match Play victory, and the Ryder Cup captain Seve Ballesteros, winner two years ago, are among those who could affect the outcome.

Sailing

Sydney Harbour awaits its own Olympic Batmobile



Bob Fisher

THE first major changes to Olympic sailing for many years will be implemented for the 2000 Games in Sydney with the likely introduction of a class that has its roots deep in the host harbour. The 49er, the overwhelming choice of the International Sailing Federation's ISAF evaluation group, is an 18-foot Skiff in all but name and a couple of feet of length.

For years the over-canvased 18-footers have been the heart of racing in Sydney and have evolved into the fastest single-hulled sailing boats in the world. The 49er, a two-man boat designed by the former 18-foot Skiff world champion Julian Bethwaite, is a direct descendant from the line that goes back more than a century but is as fresh as the harbour's famous Southerly Buster.

Lightness is part of the 49er's appeal. At last month's trials on Lake Garda in Italy it weighed in at 128kg fully rigged, some 28kg (or half a hundredweight) less than its nearest rival of the same size.

Other plusses are its large sail area, sleek narrow hull lines and a massive spinnaker for downwind sailing. Usefully, it also looks like the Batmobile with wings to support the crew onboard on trapezes.

The 49er is as far removed from the current clutch of Olympic boats as the Williams-Renaud is from the Ford Mondeo and this may provide its only barrier to selection for the Games at the ISAF's annual conference at Brighton in November. Some national federations who own their Olympic boats are set against any change but the ISAF president Paul Henderson said after the trials that "if we don't put one of these

boats in the next Olympics, we have no business running this sport".

Henderson knows he has opposition to introducing the 49er, or another like it, into the Games. But by making the trials open and inviting critics of the new-style boats, he opened many eyes. The trial sailors want the change: 16 out of 19 voted for the 49er to be an Olympic class.

The 49er's rivals in the final selection were two British-designed and built classes, the Boss and the Laser 5000, which are both still options. Chris Tibbs and Concert had a three-mile lead over Simon Walker's Toshiba Wave Warrior as the BT Global Challenge fleet neared Cape Finisterre. Nigel Smith on Time and Tide broke his right leg above the knee — but the boat's medic Lesley Bowden, with help from the sail repair team, soon mended the artificial limb.

Pole position... the 49er won the trial experts' vote as the new Games boat PETER BENTLEY

A CABLE & WIRELESS COMPANY

%9£-

MERCURY HAS TURNED BUSINESS PHONE PRICING UPSIDE DOWN AGAIN.

Does your company make lots of UK long distance calls? Then simply add Mercury UKLink to your phone system. And start counting the savings. Save 36% on a 3 minute long distance call in the UK during weekday working hours. (Even compared to the new BT basic rate.) We can tell you how much you'll save right now — over this phone. Naturally, that call won't cost you anything.

It doesn't cost anything to talk
FreeCall 0500 800 125.

Price and savings compared to standard BT rates. Offer only from working days. Calls subject to availability. Usage of up to 120 minutes per month for residential use. All prices quoted in UK.

Dettori races to his century, page 13

Scotland hit by more withdrawals, page 14

Football League faces fixture glut, page 14

Great Britain run in eight tries, page 15

SportsGuardian



All the same to me... England's reformed boozier Paul Merson laughs off his Burnham Beeches temperance league fixture

PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENKINS

England in purdah for Poles

David Lacey hears Glenn Hoddle demand a week of sacrifices from the squad gathering to overwhelm Poland with moderation

THE only way a dentist's chair will feature in England's preparations for their World Cup qualifier against Poland at Wembley on Wednesday will be if one of Glenn Hoddle's players goes down with toothache. Drinkwise, the story is likely to be small beer. Since certain members of

Terry Venables's European Championship squad were pictured having bottles of spirit poured down their throats while adopting dental surgery postures in the China Jump Bar in Hong Kong, the image of the English footballer as a breath test waiting to happen has died hard. The team's success in reaching the Euro 96 semi-finals

pushed this incident into the background but, with Hoddle's players starting a week in purdah before the Poland game, which will be England's first match back at Wembley since the summer tournament, thoughts of a repetition were inevitable. It may or may not be with this in mind that the England coach is insisting his squad

remain at the team hotel at Burnham Beeches for the duration. Under Venables the players would have been allowed home at the weekend. Hoddle clearly wants to keep an eye on them all the time. "They'll have a drink at the right time," Hoddle explained when the players reported for international duty yesterday, "but nothing over the top. They're not schoolboys. They need to be treated like adults. But the situation will be controlled. "We had a few drinks when

we met up on the Sunday for the Moldova match a month ago. We controlled that situation and that's what's going to happen now, just a few beers back at the hotel." Hoddle clearly wants to run England on stricter Continental lines without becoming a martinet. "You have to be flexible," he said, "but there's a certain line to be drawn. And you never let the players know what sort of line it is. In the past this has always worked in my favour."

During and after the tour to China and Hong Kong Venables's squad was criticised for its sloppy image and a failure to set proper standards. "The best standard we can set now is to qualify for the 1998 World Cup," Hoddle retorted yesterday. "Image? That's not Number One in my mind. The first thing is to qualify. "I hate wearing a tie but sometimes I have to. But wearing a tie or not wearing a tie is not going to get me three points on Wednesday." England already have three from their 3-0 win in Moldova. Hoddle clearly wants his players to get used to being away from their homes for seven days at a stretch and adapt to a pre-match routine which will be different but

not over-rigorous. "It's not as if we're going to be training every day," he said. "There'll be a rest period; that is part of the preparation. "But this is a game for three qualifying points. I feel that, if you're an international footballer and the manager wants you for seven days, then that should not be a problem. That's the way I want it."

One nightmarish moment dwarfs all others. AFTER labouring intermittently for two years over a new practice pitch I was increasingly disconcerted over a period of weeks to see a line of molehills moving inexorably towards it. The day that a perfectly symmetrical molehill appeared in the middle of the artificial bowling end was the day that I finally realised I'd been had. But the moles are real enough. Several of our finest cover fielders have suddenly disappeared from view, never to be heard of again. Older hands prefer to field on the wood side, protected by insect repellent to keep off the midges. Unlike England's inner-city Test grounds, at least we are spared the pigeons. There are, however, many other bird varieties to

Save the red squirrel but not on my pitch



David Hopps

A LEAFLET for the World Wide Fund For Nature dropped through my letterbox this week and this time it was returned with stipulations. By all means save the red squirrel and protect the habitat of the cornrake without delay, but nurture any living thing within one mile of my village cricket club and the next envelope will be shredded. Perhaps it was our insistence upon adopting a mole as the emblem on our new club sweaters that gave the wrong impression. Since then we have been colonised by the beggars. Phil, our beleaguered captain, hit only two cover drives along the ground all season and both became engulfed in a pile of dirt.

gorge themselves on a newly seeded square. We've heard rumours of a crack mole-killer somewhere in Dorset but there seems little point trying to trace him. It's as much as we can do to find the next away ground. Until the Eighties the adjoining field was full of cows, which periodically invaded the square and donated fertilizer. Those days have gone, not least because a prize milker wandered through an open gate one day and ended up in a swimming pool. Instead of cows we now have horses, two of them, so attentive that they rank among our most loyal spectators. One invaded the field during a match last summer and it took us half an hour to lure it towards the gate. Ten yards away from our objective it was scared off again by a blundering fool from the pavilion. He turned out to be a retired policeman.

AND NOW, thanks to the establishment of the English Cricket Board, we are officially part of The National Pyramid and charged to do our bit to bring salvation to English cricket. When Michael Atherton plays over a yorker from Heath Street in the first Test in Harare in December, it will not be his fault alone; now, not before time, we are all responsible. You may scoff but we're already doing our bit to regain the Ashes. This summer we briefly stuck a poster on the wall depicting the forward defensive, although it was soon replaced by the pitch-duty rota, which is far more important. We started an under-13 team and might even try to teach them something if anyone ever leaves work early enough. And, being the start of October, when the prices are low, we have just had our annual kit check.

Boldly announcing that "You have to look smart to play smart," our captain, sensing an OBE for services rendered to English cricket, pored over the end-of-season catalogues and prepared to spend the projected profits of the Christmas raffle. As all expenditure is approved only after several committee meetings, he invited the chairman to pass his own judgment. After much ruffling through the club bag, the judgment was handed down. "We could do with a new strap-on box," he said. And so now we're on the look-out for one, if they still exist. We're going to give it to Atherton. It will be something for him to keep the Ashes in next September.

BECKSENTRICS

THE WEIRD AND WONDERFUL WORLD OF EUROPE'S FREE THINKERS

CRIMINAL ACCESSORY

Is your husband just an accessory? Last requests are often a chance for an individual's eccentricity to survive from beyond the grave. However a judge in Barcelona has put a stop to one particularly macabre request. Maria Oridal, 62, wished to fulfill her husband's final desire of having his skin turned into a handbag, and even went so far as to sue an undertaker for refusing to make it.

LIFEBELT?

It was never like this on Baywatch. Lorenzo Trippi, a lifeguard in Ravenna, lost his job when three people drowned during his shift. It turned out that Trippi had noticed their plight, and had acted to save them by throwing out life preservers. Unfortunately, his aim was so accurate that each of the poor unfortunates drowned after being struck by the flying life belts.

BRICKS AND WATER

There are few things as frustrating as being refused planning permission when you are about to build your dream home. However Rolf Lessinger, barred from building a house near Retsa in Germany, hit upon a novel solution to bureaucratic interference. He dug a huge crater, filled it with water and built a houseboat instead. The town has no planning laws for houseboats.

PLAYING BY THEIR OWN RULES

"There's a powerful, almost sick attraction about that life. The furtiveness, flirting with danger, flirting with shame. The energy of the streets, the life on the edge — it can still pull."

Women G2 page 4

Guardian Crossword No 20,774

Set by Janus

Across

1 True correspondence from an ideal marriage (7,8)
 8 He wrote revolutionary airs too (7)
 9 Talks about the French summer-houses (7)
 11 Train made of English metal in the French way (7)
 12 He loved to paint or draw an explorer (7)
 13 Applies a match to socks (5)
 14 Taken from a passage by journalist (9)
 16 Banishes soldier-ambassadors (9)
 19 Coins said to be hidden treasures (5)
 21 Drug-firm having a nice share-out (7)
 23 A friend backing sport without financial motive? (7)

Down

1 Rope in 12 (7)
 2 Encircling bands to contain island rebellions (7)
 3 Running away to find work in proper spheres (9)
 4 Understood by one in diplomacy (5)
 5 Californian resort given new-style AA medal (7)
 6 Singer too upset to have a smoke (7)
 7 Four American suspenders (4,2,6)
 10 Armed men exchanging words with porters (5-7)
 15 Trial meant to change will (9)

17 Forage-plant by the lake (8)
 18 Was very sorry for lady in network (7)
 19 Insects on tescup (7)
 20 Makes initial experiment in packing-cases (7)
 22 Nun that is distracted by boredom (5)

Solution tomorrow

23 Stuck? Then call our solutions line on 0961 338 228. Calls cost 39p per min, cheap rates, 49p per min at all other times. Service supplied by ATG

ABWCPR

Friday

Blair

new cloak of fear falls over abul as the Islamic crusade-breaker

Catholics de

Inside